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ORIENTAL ACQUAINTANCE;

OR,

Letters from Syria.

BY

J. W. DE FOREST.



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ORIENTAL ACQUAINTANCE.

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I.

LANDING AT SMYRNA.

THE trim Boston bark which had brought me safely, though tediously tempest-beaten, from the low green shores of Massachusetts, at last lay at anchor in the Bay of Smyrna. Before my western eyes were spread out, in oriental strangeness, the shabby wharves, the fragile minarets, and the rough, red-tiled roofs of the Queen of Ionia. A huge, ruinous, glum-visaged castle sat on the lofty hill behind the city, and vainly strove to wrap its brown nakedness in a dilapidated robe of winter mist. High, bare, sombre mountains looked

down from the opposite side of the bay with a solemn stillness, which made one think of icy fingers on granite lips, forbidding them to reveal the secrets of ages. To the east opened a long gentle valley, verdurous with gardens and cypresses, and populous here and there with the roofs of Turkish villages.

Straggling orientals, evidently for the most part porters, sailors, and loafers, were moving about the quays in gay-colored raiment, which distance divested of its real tatters and thread-barenness. A negro, who had tastefully relieved the intense jet of his skin by setting it in a frame-work of white robes and turban, shone on me like an eclipsed sun with a halo of glory around its edge. A downcast donkey marched by with a long procession of loaded camels attached to his tail, reminding me of an insignificant president at the head of a mighty confederation.

Our vessel, which until then I had seldom seen except in a state of hysterical agitation, now reposed as tranquilly as the air, the mountains, and the city. The black steward, no longer perturbed lest some mischievous sea

should upset his person and his tureen into the scuppers, and bring upon his woolly head the wrath of the "old man," was muttering and chuckling to himself, probably about some by-gone flirtation in the colored circles of Boston. The mulatto cook, having spent his leisure hours on the voyage in making a fiddle, had taken out his pieces of maple, and was hopefully whittling at his unfinished task. The Greek boy sailor, an unfortunate mortal, who had been kicked and cuffed all the way across the ocean for not intuitively understanding English, now leaned his greasy face upon the bulwarks and stared with joyous black eyes at his native city.

The boat was let down from the side, and, in my solitary dignity as only passenger, I descended the ladder with the captain, and was rowed ashore. The failing timbers of a ruinous wooden quay, symbolical, in their rottenness, of the people and government of the country, gave me footing on the shore of Turkey. A tottering shed-like building served as passport office; and there the captain introduced me as a true-blue, home-spun American

citizen. I had left home in a hurry ; my passport had been sent on by mail, and it was then reposing obscurely in the drawers of our resident consul. But police regulations are not enforced with troublesome strictness in the East ; and I was allowed to pass without a word of grumbling, or the expense of a piastre in bribes. I wondered at several sleepy officials, who sat cross-legged on tables, holding papers awkwardly in one hand, whilst they leisurely wrote with the other. But what most struck me, was a negro, who, dressed handsomely in the Turkish style, lounged quietly on a bench near the door, and occupied himself with smoking a meditative pipe. "Do you see that fellow ?" said the captain. " He is as good as any of them here." Coming from a country where individuals of this color bear all the marks of a depressed and despised people, I saw in this man the first of a species. No sneaking, no grinning, no small impertinences ; but self-possession, self-respect in every feature, dignity and ease in every motion. No Turk in the room had more calmness, gravity, and intelligence in his air ; or

looked more like the gentleman, Hamlet, than he did like the gentleman, Othello. I saw at once that he had been treated like a man all his life, and that not the least suspicion had ever entered his brain that he was not a man. He gave me new ideas of the possibilities of the African race, and made me look forward to a supposable time when negroes shall have a chance with the rest of us. Since then, I have seen in Constantinople a black captain drilling a company of white soldiers, and black officials on horseback, grandly attended by gorgeously dressed and blood-mounted white servants.

Before reaching Turkey, my imagination was possessed by an idea which I knew to be absurd, but which I could not shake out of it. The fat Turk in the geography, and the wealth of the Arabian Nights, formed the warp and woof of my Eastern expectations. I fancied that each oriental possessed an independent fortune, and smoked interminable pipes, seated on luxurious cushions, and attired magnificently in purple and fine linen. I was extremely shocked, therefore, to find the greatest part of the population at work, and dressed in

very ancient and seedy clothing. The age of gold has run its sands in the East; and, with their ancestral character, the Turks have worn out their ancestral jackets.

I had a letter of introduction to a South Carolinian resident at Smyrna. He met me at the landing with a hospitable invitation to his roof. I never yet saw a South Carolinian who was not a gentleman, and a most intelligent and well-informed one. I could fill a page or two with the good qualities and the civilities of my host and his charming wife; but I do not choose to introduce the public to their courteous and amiable privacy. We had rides to the old Genoese castle on the hill; rides to the schools of the American missionaries; rides to the country-seats of some of their wealthy Smyrniote friends. Never shall I forget my shame and indignation, when, at the tall age of twenty years, I found myself maliciously obliged to cross, for the first time, the back of a donkey. The biggest biped in the party, they had provided me with the smallest quadruped. It was a creature that the king of Lilliput might have ridden without much

danger to his Serene Littleness from too lofty a fall. His legs associated themselves in my mind with pipe-stems ; and I should have been agonized with a fear of their breaking, had I not discovered that my own toes were within reaching distance of the ground. I felt like a big ass mounted on a little one ; like a mountain taking a ride on a molehill. How I envied my companions in the dignity of horse-back ! and how they laughed as they surveyed my absurd appearance from the rear, or cantered ahead until I was almost hopelessly out of sight ! A bare-legged Greek ran behind me and administered moving persuasions to my sluggish beast, in the form of maniac grunts and yells, and innumerable punches from a sharp-pointed stick. At every fresh poke came a whisk of the bare tail, a discontented shake of those ignominious ears, a spasmodic scramble of the hind legs ; and then everything went on as before. The donkey was evidently used to his master's troublesome ways, and had learned to treat these impertinent personalities with proper contempt.

While at Smyrna, I kept a sharp look-out for houris and odalisques; but if I saw any, I never knew it. The Turkish women confounded my inquisitive eyes with their vexatious veils and swaddlings, and left a great deal more to my imagination than was satisfactory. They seemed to be absurdly contented with their ghostly way of life; not a soul of them ever solicited me to carry her off from the harem of a tyrannical husband or father. Accordingly, I consoled myself by looking at the bare-faced Greek girls, who stood all day in the door-ways, watching the passers-by, and gossiping vociferously with each other across the street. I found more than my match here, for they beat me hollow at staring, and looked me out of countenance so often that I got positively ashamed of myself. Right opposite my entertainer's house lived a remarkably pretty one—a girl, in fact, whose face would be considered attractive in any country. We soon struck up a sort of intimacy of eyes, and carried it on for some time without any results that I ever heard of. Whenever I came home, or went out, I usually

found her standing in her own door, as if lying in wait for anything that could divert her idle brain. Accordingly, like a very young traveler, I would saunter up and down, staring and stared at, until her audacious black eyes would get the victory and send me off, admiring, but exceedingly discomfited. She very often had a little girl by the hand, steadyng its uneasy and captious diminutiveness on the threshold. There was likewise a certain shallow young Greek who haunted the house, walking independently in and out at pleasure, and, to all appearance, making himself comfortably at home. After much jealous cogitation, I began to be afraid that my Ionian enchantress was the wife of said Greek, if not also the mother of said baby. I accordingly became somewhat cautious in my advances; not on account of any particular aversion to babies, but because I felt a singular respect for those long knives which nearly all the Smyrniote Greeks carry in their girdles. In short, not a word ever came of it; not so much as an action for a breach of promise.

The only other natives of the place whose

faces strongly impressed themselves upon my memory, were three rascally Smyrniote dogs. Having been on a walk up the hill with one of the American missionaries, we were returning at a killing pace with the intention of getting home in time for dinner. My friend took what he supposed to be a short cut through a mass of Turkish houses ; and we drove on rejoicing, until we found ourselves in a little court, surrounded by the back doors of various respectable Moslem dwellings. Out rushed the three dogs aforesaid, from as many gateways, and, with masterly generalship, seized the narrow pass by which we had entered, and thus cut off our retreat. I verily expected to be bitten to death ; for we had not an arm of any kind, not a cane, not so much as an umbrella. The dogs yelled, and leaped, and snapped at us, very much after the fashion of our Indians, who enjoy themselves gymnastically around a prisoner before disemboweling him or knocking out his brains. "There you are," they seemed to observe in their snarling way. "You're in for it now. How are you going to get out again ? Don't you wish you were

in some other country?" May all the deities and demi-deities and demi-semi-deities of chance be praised for having strewed some loose pebbles, of two or three pounds weight each, about that detestable little inclosure! Seizing these munitions, we commenced a disorganizing cannonade upon our enemies, and routed them from their position so far as to enable us to make a rapid exit from our trap. They chased us into the street, where we rallied by the side of a pile of rubbish, and gave them such another volley as sent them back in a hurry to their ambush. I pause to make an observation, drawn from this adventure and divers others similar, that dogs are much more afraid of stones than of sticks, knowing by personal experience, or perhaps by currish tradition, that they hit harder, and at a greater distance.

Without being aware of it at the time, I escaped one other danger, not exactly during my stay at Smyrna, but previous to it. A few days before my arrival, an American steamer, the first in these waters, had sailed out of the bay on its maiden trip down the coast towards

Egypt. That very night, the watchful captain ran his vessel stern on to the island of Scio, and gave his bewildered passengers an unpleasant and unexpected opportunity of visiting that famous island. Head winds and a long voyage had prevented me from sharing in this adventure. My detention also secured me a pleasant traveling companion to Beirut, and, indeed, through much of Palestine. An American Doctor of Divinity, recruiting in the Old World a body which had been somewhat fatigued in the New, arrived from Athens at Smyrna. A man whose kindly countenance was the window of his genial spirit, and whose well-rounded frame was a symbol of his capacious intellect and largely-stored conversation. A man of easy and sincere friendliness ; of quick sympathies with every human mood, from a joke to a tear ; of natural ingenuity for extracting happiness from every chance wayside flower, and for discovering the substance of every shadow which darkened the path.

II.

SMYRNA TO BEIRUT.

TOGETHER the Doctor and I bade farewell to our kind friends at Smyrna, and together, in sudden comradeship, we marched away to the embarking place of the Austrian steamer. Laden with three solid trunks and a fat carpet-bag, a Turkish porter preceded us at a fast walk. Rewarding this man with the reasonable sum of ten cents, we got into a low, gondola-like boat, and reached the black sides of the Austrian packet. A fine vessel—one of the best in the Mediterranean—with handsome cabins fore and aft, and a spacious quarter-deck. Everything about her was on a large scale, even to the fleas, which were Brobdignagian. These animals were chiefly smuggled on board, I suspect, by a devout-minded rabble which was going on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. As the said rabble was furnished by many different nations, so the fleas probably came from

many different countries. There were Greekish, Turkish, Persian, Armenian, Maltese, Hebrew, and Russian; and all of them seemed to be vivaciously happy, and to enjoy an excellent appetite, in spite of the motion of the vessel. In fact, wherever I met these animals, they appeared to me remarkably fitted as travelers, possessing uncommon cheerfulness and toughness, great powers of insinuation, and extraordinary tact in securing board and lodgings.

All about the main-deck, and even over one-half of the quarter-deck, lay the pilgrims—men, women, and children, folded in a nameless variety of costumes, picking out the soft planks, chatting and smoking. There were also two or three families of Turks, who pretended to a higher position in life, and had a little pen of boards and spars around them to keep out the unbelievers. Here and there, individuals were engaged in preparing frugal meals from family stocks of provisions; and, in an hour or two after our departure, all these modern crusaders were gravely eating their dinners. I was struck with the meagre econo-

my of one poor wretch, who had wandered thus far, from I know not what portion of earth, on his pilgrimage to the Holy City. He was a man, ghastly and beggarly, dressed in ragged cotton, the chilliness of which was somewhat relieved by an old shaggy capote. He took from his pocket a wooden bowl, a wooden spoon, and a lump of coarse, black, hard bread. He broke half the bread into the bowl, mingled it with water, and, when it was somewhat softened, ate it to the last crumb with a famished eagerness. Then, wiping the bowl, he replaced it in his pocket, with the rest of the bread, and gazed around with a stolid contentedness, rather like hopelessness, as if he had nothing more to ask of bountiful nature. Unused, in our abundant land, to human want, it was shocking to me to behold such poverty and such hunger; but it was still more painful to look in the man's white face, and read there that he hoped for nothing more, and that he had felt and knew he might still feel a yet keener misery. It may be, indeed, that I was mistaken in his case, and that he was simply an ascetic, qualifying

himself for joy in heaven by wretchedness on earth; or perhaps only an invalid putting his stomach on short allowance as a remedy for colic or dyspepsia.

The Doctor and I walked up and down among the sprawling groups of pilgrims. Puffing thin wreaths of smoke through their mustachios, they answered our earnest eyes with grave looks of languid curiosity. "Oh, the curse of Babel!" said the Doctor. "How I want to talk to these men, and how I can't!" Stopping before an aquiline-visaged Oriental, who was lighting his interminable pipe for the twentieth time, he gave vent to his social longings. "How you smoke!" said the Doctor, in undisguised English. The man shook his head indolently, and from his odorous seventh heaven replied, for aught I know, in the language of the Milky Way or the lost Pleiad. The Doctor pointed to the well-used pipe, and then to the funnels of the steamer, now sending out clouds of dusky vapor. The lounging answered with a delighted grin of comprehension, and passed the joke on among his appreciating comrades. After that, my

friend had an interesting interview with a vivacious, good-looking, well-dressed young fellow, whom we found to be a Syrian. As my friend spoke not a word of Arabic, and the Syrian spoke nothing else, it took a long time to execute a very short conversation. The Doctor, however, imagined he had discovered that the man was from Tripoli, and not from Beirut; and that he was a merchant, and did not own any camels. Nothing could exceed the good humor of these people, nor the delighted eagerness with which they would say a thing twenty times over, and surround the dim idea with a halo of dumb show.

But our most intimate and favorite acquaintances were a couple of curious beings from Russia. One of them was a woman, fat, fair, and fifty; rosy, respectable, and wonderfully communicative. That is to say, she would have been communicative, had we possessed so much as the tatter of a language in common. She used to treat us to long and valuable observations, in Russian, on some unknown topic, gesturing earnestly, smiling in the right place, I have no doubt, and seeming to think that

we understood and appreciated every word. Then the Doctor or I would make a reply in English; no matter on what subject; holding forth just as long as we pleased, and always certain of a patient and attentive hearing. She would listen eagerly to the end, smile with a perplexed air, shake her head, and recommence with as much vivacity and hopefulness as before. Whether she were talking religion, or matrimony, or politics, or scandal, I never had the slightest idea. Day after day, we communed in this style; and, in the course of a thousand years, should, I suppose, have formed a language of our own. Stephens speaks of a similar incident which occurred to him, I believe, on his journey from Moscow to St. Petersburgh. I related my own and Stephens's experiences to a Russian nobleman whom I met in France. "Yes," he said, laughing, "it is very natural. It is just like our common people. They never understand why a foreigner does not speak Russian. They say: this man has a mouth like a Christian; he has a nose like a Christian; a throat like a Christian; why can he not talk like a Christian?"

Once, and, I believe, only once, our garrulous companion succeeded in puncturing our brains with an idea. She had been talking to me with her customary earnestness, but with an air much more serious than usual. A nondescript man, who sat by us, understood most of what she said, and translated it to the Doctor in French. "This woman tells your friend that she left a son in her country, about as old as he, who looks something like him; and, whenever she looks at your friend, she thinks of her son." I thought of my own mother at home, and turned silently to this simple-hearted Russian mother. She saw that I understood her meaning and her emotion; the tears burst out on her jolly cheeks, and, for a few moments, her voice trembled with sobs.

The other Russian was a male individual, standing four feet two, or thereabouts, in his sheepskin boots, and seeming, to my eye, like a fair-complexioned mummy. He had a withered and wizened physiognomy; little, piggish eyes, set very far back in his head, as if they were of no particular use to him; and, alto-

gether, a most dried-up and undersized corporation. Of his age I could form no precise idea; he might have been fifty, or he might have been a hundred and fifty. He wore a high cap of untanned sheepskin, with the wool inwards; a long overcoat of the same, and pantaloons and boots ditto. I tried to imagine what would be the perplexity of a sheep in his society, as to how he should address him, whether as man or mutton. I took him for a Laplander or a Samojede, or some other of those polar bipeds, imperfectly related to the human race. His politeness was immense, and of a character solemnly ludicrous. If we spoke to him he never replied in words, but took off his monument of a cap, and bowed nearly to the deck, with a stupendous gravity like that of an iceberg. To every observation he would return the same mute answer; and we could obtain a dozen of these laborious salutes from him in succession. He evidently respected us vehemently for the quality of our broadcloth, but considered our society hopeless as far as regarded a satisfactory interchange of ideas. He, too, was going to Jerusalem, and carried with

him, I verily believe, something of the true pilgrim spirit, and, I am quite certain, many of the true pilgrim fleas. We used to find him, in the morning, stationed on the bow of the boat, his face towards the Holy City, and his eyes devoutly bent on an old prayer-book, worn, thumbed, greasy, and, like himself, bound in sheepskin. We four, two Russians and two Americans, often repeated the word Jerusalem together, and, by the sound of that name, magnetized ourselves into a momentary comradeship of sympathies and object.

Our woolly friend seemed to be very intimate with the lady, and to march in and out of her state room in the forward cabin at pleasure. The Doctor thought that he might be her uncle, or, more probably, her husband. I maintained that he was some kind of a head shepherd, or chief wool-gatherer, who was permitted to clothe himself out of the perquisites of his office. The Doctor determined to solve the mystery by questioning the lady directly on this delicate subject. Pointing at Sheepskins, he nodded in a knowing way, and said: "Is that your husband?" The good-humored

creature stared, laughed, and shook her head doubtfully, as much as to observe that she did not catch the full force of his observation. "Is that your old man?" persisted the Doctor, pointing first at her, then at her friend, and imitating the motion of putting a ring on the finger. She fairly cackled with laughter when she had caught his idea, and immediately entered into a long explanation in Russian, which put the matter so much in the dark that we never tried to understand it afterwards. The Doctor and I disagreed to the last, as to whether Sheepskins had a connubial or only a pastoral connection with her household.

As I stared at the generally dirty equipments of our fellow-travelers to Jerusalem, I thought of their probably no less dirty predecessors, who performed the same pilgrimage seven hundred years ago. I thought of the innumerable hosts who then crossed these seas in slow galiots and fragile shallops, and I tried to calculate how many more would have made the voyage had they possessed such steam-boats as the Imperatrice. I looked at

our venerable wool-gatherer and imagined him Peter the Hermit, silent from asceticism, dirty from pious scorn of the world, burning with zeal until his very sheepskins were likely to be scorched by the inward fervor. I transformed the fat Russian female into the Empress Helena, on her way to the Holy Land, to locate devout humbugs and discover the five feet of the blessed ass. My fancy breathed upon the skeletons of the vast armies of the cross, and restored them to life, glorious with arms, courage, and nobility, ardent with hatred of the unbelievers, inflexible under difficulties and misery, longing only that their mortal eyes might close upon the freed sepulchre of Christ. I thought of Barbarossa with his diademed blonde hair; of Philip the beautiful with his wily smile and French courtesy; of English Richard with his bloody battle-axe, his lute, and his troubadour verses. I saw that pilgrimism had dwindled to a very small dwarfage of its giant youthfulness, and that religion had withdrawn greatly from exterior life to carry on its conflicts in the unseen world of the soul. I considered that the existence of humanity had

grown more intellectual and less ecstatic; more like a treatise of philosophy and less like a ballad. I concluded that the tide of enthusiasm had been subsiding for some centuries, and would continue to subside until some new divine idea, some new revelation, should draw it up again, but with a different splendor on its surface, to the old height. It would be hard now to find three hundred thousand fools who would go through suffering and death to reach a fabled shrine; but, a century hence, humanity may be mad again. It would be hard now to find three hundred thousand spirits winged with a living poesy which should bear them passionately over flood and through flame; but, a century hence, the whole world may be lyric again. The enthusiasm, self-devotion, and energy of the old crusaders soar loftily through my admiration, while the insignificant end of such a mighty endeavor reposes in the quiet little slough of my contempt.

I was recalled from my comparisons between ancient and modern pilgrimage, by the rich brogue of the Scotch engineer. A most indubitable Sawney, lean as a New Englander,

fair and freckled, he shone upon me in raiment of white linen: not flowing and spotless, like the vestments of angels and Millerites; but a tight-fitting and somewhat grimy suit of round jacket and trowsers. The Doctor held him with his eye, like the Ancient Mariner of Coleridge; but instead of telling his own story, after the fashion of that interesting old gentleman, he simply made his captive relate his. I have forgotten it now, and only mention the man because he was one of a class of wandering Britons, who direct the splashing existence of Austrian and Levantine steam-boats. "The officers are often Germans," said he; "but the sailors are a'most aw Italians, sir; an' I find it hard work to mak mysel understood. I canna learn their lingo, sir; an' when I try to talk it, they only laugh, an' dinna understand me."

Another person attracted more of my attention, although her presence only floated a moment on my vision, and then, like a soap-bubble, vanished. A houri! an odalisque! the wife of a pasha! nothing less, envious reader, nothing less, by the beard of the prophet! A

new pasha of Cyprus had lately sailed for the island of his government in a Turkish man-of-war. For some unknown reason, he did not take his harem with him, but confided it to the quicker and easier locomotion of an infidel steam-boat. During five days we had this precious cargo on board, for the most part of the time sepulchred in one of the state-rooms, under the very feet of us pacing, uneasy giaours. There was but one wife ; from which I concluded that the pasha was a *parvenu* not yet arrived at the dignity of polygamy ; or else that he had taken his favorite with him in the ship-of-war. Once only I saw this "secret jewel, this hidden treasure," come on deck, and pay a gossiping visit to the Turkish families there, who were probably a part of her following. Folded from head to foot in white, she swept noiselessly athwart our vision, like a passenger of that ghostly bark, the Flying Dutchman. For a moment, as she bent to sit on the proffered cushions, she flung the veil back, and exposed, perhaps intentionally, her face to the gaze of us dogs of infidels. The next moment she retired again

into its spectral secrecy, and left us to our wonder. So earnestly did my curious eyes fix upon those features, that I have them before me still. O pasha of Cyprus! I saw your wife's face, and I remember it now, and there is no revenge nor help for you. It was the countenance of a woman who would have been handsome, but for her wax-like pallor. The features were regular, something between Greek and Roman; the eyebrows delicately arched, and the eyes wondrously dark and lustrous in contrast with the pale skin. I have caught glimpses of other Turkish women since, and have always remarked the same colorless, almost cadaverous complexion.

After two days of calmest, sunniest sailing, we found ourselves one pleasant morning at anchor off the mouldy city of Rhodes. The famous harbor of this old mistress of the seas was so small that our boat could hardly have entered it if the Colossus had been there to push her in. A few fishing and coasting shallops, with high, sharp bows and lateen yards, were idling away their time inside of a diminu-

tive mole, like a company of seedy Turks in a coffee-house. High blank walls of the olden days looked down upon a *marina*, or quay, to which a few lounging Greeks and Turks gave some lazy appearance of life. Traversing the *marina* and passing under an elderly archway, we found ourselves in the most mournful, low-spirited, forsaken, slouching, tatterdemalion, old city in creation. I never saw anywhere such a total absence of life in a place which called itself inhabited. We halted in one spot commanding a view up and down the principal street for at least a quarter of a mile, and counted all the citizens within range of our vision. They amounted to just three: a donkey, a man who was driving it, and a woman; and it is extremely possible that the two persons first mentioned were from the country. Now and then, a lonesome individual would bear down a side-street, or heave in sight around a distant corner; but it was like meeting ships on the ocean. You felt inclined to speak a man when he came near you, and ask him his latitude, or when he left port. As this street was lined with old palaces of the

knights of St. John, its solitude looked doubly desponding and woeful, by contrast with the populous splendor that once inhabited there. The meaner-built alleys, especially where there were shops and cafés, showed more signs of a still-existent circulation of blood through this old, melancholy heart. I suppose, in fact, that very few Rhodians of the present generation feel rich enough to live in a decent house.

Some shabby boys gave chase to us, and begged with whining importunity that we would employ them as guides. One of them, a Jew of about eighteen, seemed to me the most abject creature that ever humanity had occasion to be ashamed of. If you only looked at him, he would, as it were, sneak to your feet, and, with his whole air and soul, grovel in the dust. I felt as if I wanted to kick him, but did not do so, far fear of dirtying my boots. A turbulent Frenchman of our party shared this indignation of contempt so strongly that he proceeded to make use of his energetic toes on the spot. To every kick (and some of them were cruelly hard) the miserable poltroon responded by a whine, a smile, and a supplicating

out-stretched hand. The Doctor persuaded our violent fellow-traveler to desist from his manual lecture on dignity ; and we took this disreputable specimen of manhood into our service as a pilot.

We climbed a low eminence behind the city, and got a view of a rude, un-tilled, forsaken country. It was a relief to turn from this terrene desert to the pure sky above, and see nothing there ruinous, nothing forlorn and death-like. And yet the turf at our feet was green and hopeful, and the whole land showed large possibilities of richness and beauty. In fact, throwing out the human desolation, the scene from the deserted garden where we stood was one of remarkable loveliness and even grandeur. Beneath us were the brown towers, walls, and domes of the mouldering city, now softened by distance into a certain decayed and melancholy grace. Beyond them was the broad, tranquil glitter of the Mediterranean sea, stretched out as pure, as brilliant, as unfurrowed as if it belonged to the youngest, the most virgin planet of heaven. On its eastern shore, as distinct and near

as if only seen across a river, rose crowded snowy ranges of Ionian mountains. There they sat, white and silent, like a troop of immeasurable polar bears; or, to speak more poetically, like a band of clouds which had paused to rest on the brink of an ocean before commencing their flight across it.

We walked back into Rhodes, and climbed those battered ramparts, so long and so heroically defended, by the knights of St. John, against the storm of Islamism. Some remnants of that old warfare still remained, in the shape of gigantic stone bullets, too heavy to be easily moved. What nest-eggs, I thought, out of which to hatch stories of dead chivalry and by-gone monasticism! Closing our tour at the *marina*, we paid off our sneak of a guide, and the Frenchman gave him a couple of parting kicks, by way of perfectly settling accounts, and making everything square and comprehensible.

Night saw us on board the steamer, and morning saw us before Cyprus. Back of Larnaca, the capital of the island, a broad, marshy, fever-haunted plain sweeps northward, until it

is arrested by a range of middle-sized, treeless mountains. The landscape was, therefore, tamely uninteresting; and the town itself bore no marks of importance, ancient or modern. The Doctor and I went to see an unfortunate Englishman who had been posted here as consul, and whose only consolation seemed to be his boat and the society of his quiet, timid wife. It seemed very much like making an oyster of oneself to hold such a place; but then there are some men who fancy the tranquil stick-in-the-mud existence of oysters. Our consul was a thoroughly amphibious character, and examined the points of a clipper, Turkish corvette, which lay in the offing, with as much interest as a horse-dealer would those of a racer, or an astronomer those of a new comet. We saw some half-dressed boys and girls lounging about the muddy beach, but could not discover the sign of a Venus or Cupid among them. Cyprus is no longer the island of the beautiful goddess; or, at least, she keeps very few of her fairest priestesses there. Where are the bacchanalias of antiquity, where the rites of love, where the worshipers of

passion? Gone like the foam from which Venus rose; faded like the flowers they twined round their foreheads; dissipated into nothingness like the smoke of their extinguished altars. What a shame that beautiful women and loving women should grow old and die, and not remain forever, shining like stars in the eyes of succeeding ages! O, Mother Nature! so chary in perfect human lovingness and loveliness, and yet so wasteful of them, what hast thou done with Helen, and Sappho, and Aspasia, and Cleopatra? And what has become of that love which for a woman would bury the halls of Troy in ashes, and for a woman would fling away the empire of the earth? "Peace!" replies Nature, "the times that are are better than the times that have been; and the beauty of virtue is better than the beauty of vice. Since my youth I am growing ever wiser and juster; and I break every symbol, that I may gradually make place for the reality. Cyprian Venus must go out from my polite society now, and her doves must nestle in the outcast bosoms of Egyptian Ghazeeyeh, or roost on the branches of disreputable Jardins Mabille."

Another sun-bathed morning found us at anchor under the shadow of Lebanon, in the roadstead of Beirut. Night had veiled from us the sea-view of the snowy range of the mountain; and we now had before us only ridges of three or four thousand feet in height, forming a kind of rocky coast-guard. Brownly bare and desolate in many places; sombrely green in others, with forests of pine; more freshly verdant here and there with mulberries, figs, and young wheat-fields; and spotted populously with the glaring sun-lit walls of lofty villages. A low, green plain, steaming with heat, united the foot of the mountain to the little promontory on whose northern slope we beheld the feeble, second childhood of old Berytus. Brown ramparts held the city's dull life in their stony embrace, sheltering a confused crush of sombre walls, balconied windows, diminutive domes, and acute minarets.

And behind, like an amphitheatre, swept up towards the sky the curved slope of the gardens. One vast mass of verdure; olives, oranges, lemons, mulberries, vines; something that we should call orchards in America; some-

thing like a forest of tendril-wreaths and shrubbery. In one or two places, cypresses raised their cones of dark green into the air, shooting up out of some populous cemetery, as if they were the minarets of the dead. And, scattered everywhere, shone houses of pale yellow stone; all of them neat and attractive through the distance; some large, elegant, airy, with the graceful windows and archings of Arab architecture.

As soon as the Turkish sanitary officers had ascertained the satisfactory state of our health, the steamer was invaded by a crowd of meagre Arab boatmen. With the eagerness of terriers in a bin of mice, they leaped among the trunks and passengers, shouting, swearing, pushing, hauling, and seemingly on the point of foaming at the mouth, and going into fits. What they wanted was, not to rob us, or cut our throats, according to all appearances, but simply to row us ashore. The Doctor and I retreated, in dismay, from this energetic rabble, and took post on the furthest limit of the quarter-deck. We had a friend living at Beirut; but we were puzzled, for the moment, how to find him.

Talking Arabic was out of the question, and not a sound of any other language burst from the garrulous lips around us. "Well," said the Doctor, with quietly-reflected desperation, "now for it in English." And, turning to a slender young Syrian, who at that moment approached us, he said, in his calmest manner: "Do you know Mr. So-and-so, who lives at Beirut?"

To our astonishment the big-trowsered individual smiled and replied, in our own speech, with only a tolerable taint of foreign accent: "Oh yes, sir; I know him very well, sir."

"Why, where did you learn your English?" ejaculated the Doctor.

"I learned it in the school of the American missionaries, sir."

"Well, can you direct us to the gentleman's house?"

"I shall go and bring you a boat, and carry you there directly, sir."

Off he went, but he had not returned, when, looking into a shallop which had just rounded to under the stern of the steamer, I saw a well-known smile beaming up into my face.

My recognition hung in the wind for a moment; for years had passed since I had looked upon the owner of that smile. But its radiance was followed by the tone of a familiar voice, sending to my ear a home-melodied "How do you do?" Forgetting all about our messenger, we soon clambered into this pinnae of friendship, and, with a few sweeps of the oar, landed among the broken columns whose prostrate antiquity strews the shores of Beirut. Through its contracted, shadowy streets, over a patch of exterior sand, we passed into the charmed orientalism of the gardens. A narrow alley, lined by hedges of gigantic prickly pear, conducted us to the stairway of the mansion of hospitality. Slender branches of southern trees murmured a blessing over me as I ascended; and, from above, dark, lucent eyes looked kindly and curiously down into my upturned face. The shadow of a new home was over me, and the sunlight of welcome was gleaming from its lattices.

III.

BEIRUT.

THE Beirut house in which I found myself, was a three-storied edifice of hewn stone, finished with a very respectable degree of taste and mechanical neatness. The basement, a massive, heavily-vaulted substructure, was occupied by the printing-press and the chapel of the American mission. It was for this reason that a long flight of steps hospitably invited the visitor to the eating, sleeping, and conversational regions of the second floor. British cannon balls, pitched wrathfully into Beirut years ago by Charley Napier, now formed, half-imbedded in plaster, a peaceful upper crust to the stone balustrade of the stairway. On the landing-place, looking a rich welcome, were grouped dazzling dark eyes, luxuriant folds of raven hair, cheeks flushed with the warmest human olive. With the pressure of American and Syrian hands upon ours, we went through a

stone-paven passage into a spacious, lofty-roofed saloon. Broad, cushioned divans lined the walls on three sides; and the ceiling slept securely on ponderous beams of Mt. Lebanon pine, not inelegantly carved and tinted. The dark Syrian eyes glanced joyously away into other halls, and left us to the flow of home talk, interrupted years before, and now gushing suddenly through its old channels.

In the afternoon came Syrian visits, some of which were complimentary to my arrival. With endless salutations, a stout Arab lady lounged into the hall, followed by a daughter in early womanhood. The girl's dark face, and excessively black hair and eyes, contrasted strongly with a gauzy white veil thrown over her head and falling down her shoulders. A dress fitting closely to the waist, and a shawl folded loosely round the hips, gave high relief to a slender, yet luxurious form, which stepped with a leisurely, voluptuous motion. This southern ease and voluptuousness seemed to be her natural character; yet she was stiff sometimes, and almost always silent, from mingled timidity and conceit. "May your day be

prosperous," said mother and daughter, laying their right hands on their bosoms.

"May your day be blessed!" was the answer

"What is your condition to-day?"

"God give you peace. We hope you are well."

"By your favor."

"By the favor of God."

And thus the conversation shambled and scraped on the legs of compliment, having an appearance of locomotion without really getting on at all. Each party had the air of standing at the door of the subject, bowing and smirking, and manoeuvring to induce the other to enter first. These women were of a neighboring family, which had long had intercourse with the American missionaries at Beirut. They were, consequently, somewhat imbued with foreign ideas, and were dressed in a style partly native and partly foreign. But close on their departure came the visit of a lady of the purest Syrian fashion, the wife of one of the upper ten among the Christian population of the city. Laying aside the long white wrapper which she had worn in the street to

shield her from Moslem gazers, she entered the hall in all the gorgeous silkiness of Eastern raiment. A woman of about twenty-five, with blue eyes, a blonde complexion, slightly tinged with rose, passably regular features, and a sweet, kindly smile. Her brown hair was nearly covered by a crimson tarboosh, bound with a gay scarf, and adorned with a long silken tassel which fell down her neck. Woven into the hair was a silken network, weightily spangled with gold coins, floating over her shoulders like a galaxy of quarter-eagles. A gay robe of heavy Damascus silk only half concealed the bosom, and, clinging ungracefully tight about the form, would have descended to the floor, had not the long skirt been folded up and tucked into the girdle so as to fall about to the midleg. The universal shawl hung loosely twisted across the hips, seeming as if it would unlink its folds and fall at every slow footstep. Large silken trowsers, fastened just below the calf, reached, in rich droopings, to the small ankles and yellow-slipped feet. Such was the appearance of the lady Aseen of the Bait Susa; and very similar,

on a smaller scale, was that of her daughter Sultana.

Leading her child by the hand, Aseen advanced with the slow, voluptuous tread of her country-women, murmuring all the while smiling salutations in hyperbolical Arabic. Some fragments of her conversation were translated to me, but they have blown away, as lightly as thistle-downs, from my memory. She bowed her head to let me examine its golden adornments. Perhaps she flattered herself at the impression such splendor must produce on the youthful Howadji from the New World. She had better have rejoiced in her blue eyes and fair cheeks; for it was they principally that fixed my wonder. She asked us to come and see her at their house; and then, with many salutations, lounged away as voluptuously as she came. Another sketch of another style of feminine Syrian humanity, and I have done, for the present, with that branch of the romantic. Its subject, a native of Beirut, bore the name of the great French *tragedienne*, and had a face which was of itself worthy of all most beautiful tragedy. She would have

been called handsome anywhere; handsome in the saloons of New York or Philadelphia, in the boxes of La Scala, or in the court of England's Queen. Wavy black hair; eyes of the richest hazel; features slightly aquiline, but regular; a complexion of the most gorgeous brunette, and a noble, spiritual expression, fitted to speak the highest feelings of life. What a realization she was of all odalisques, when she met me, in her jacket embroidered with gold, her twisted shawl folded negligently across her waist, and the clouds of her gauzy veil gathered around her face, so as to bring into splendid relief its rich color! And I was told that she had a sister who was esteemed handsomer still. Both are married, unfortunate reader, and neither of them are widows, so that you and I may look elsewhere.

An afternoon ride to the sandy, stony peak of the promontory of Beirut,—a look at the blue Mediterranean waves, easily tossing the sharp hulls and sunlit sails of Arab coasting-barks,—a stare into dilapidated Roman cisterns, hewn in the solid sea-side rock, completed my first Syrian day.

With evening came three men of the warrior Druze race of Mt. Lebanon. They looked finely in their large white turbans and white vestments, covered, in part, by neat woolen tunics of broad black and white stripes, as they laid their hands on their breasts, and, with deep voices, gave us the evening salutation. Dark bronzed faces; stern black eyes; straight, lithe forms; a grave, fearless, yet respectful carriage. The common people of the plain have the air of serfs compared with these heroic, turbulent mountaineers. "We have come, O Hakeem," said one of the party, addressing the master of the house, "we have come to declare to you our intention of becoming Protestants. What we wish to know is, whether you or the English will protect us as such, and save us from being soldiers to the Sultan."

"We can do nothing of the kind for you yourselves," returned the Hakeem; "nor can we assure you of the protection of the English."

"It is well, O Hakeem! But this makes no change in our purpose. Please God, we shall yet be Protestants."

The conversation lasted for half an hour, when they rose, and with another grave salutation retired. "What do they mean?" I said to the Hakeem. "Will they become Protestants?"

"If God wills, to use their own favorite phrase. But, unfortunately, what is on the end of their tongues, is no indication of what is at the bottom of their hearts. According to their tenets, a man may profess the faith which suits a present emergency, so long as he holds the truth in secret."

A word further must be said of the black eyes which welcomed my arrival from the landing-place at the head of the stairs. Two of them belonged to a girl bearing the musical name of Lulu, which signifies a *pearl*. Lulu was only fourteen at this time, but as mature as an American girl at eighteen. Her parents were dead, and her brothers, peasants of Mt. Lebanon, had given her, at the age of seven, into the charge of an American family. She had been brought up something like a daughter, something like a scholar. She was by birth a Greek; by choice a Protestant; spoke

English nearly as well as her mother tongue, and was somewhat Americanized in dress and manners. Not in heart, however; for she loved Syria patriotically, and colored and pouted if she heard it abused.

Khazma, a Druze girl by right of descent, but also a Protestant by sentiment, had a history very similar to what I have told of Lulu, and was a year or two her senior. The trio was completed by that same Raheel of whom I have just uttered my complimentary opinions. She, too, spoke English; slowly, as she did her own language; but correctly, and with a perfect accent. The education of her husband—an uncommonly intelligent and well-informed Syrian—had been begun in Arabic and Syriac, by a former Maronite patriarch, and carried on in sundry other languages, in connection with the American missionaries. The fanatical old Maronite, a great hater of Bibles himself, unwittingly had a large share in training an important assistant in the work of translating the Scriptures into acceptable Arabic. Butrus Bistány, that is, Peter Gardiner, as this lucky husband was called. spoke

English well, and used to visit us nearly every day to hold a chatty conversation over pipes and coffee. "I wish that man would ask me to dinner," said the Doctor, after one of these frequent confabulations. "I want to see a real Arab dinner." A good-natured friend carried the observation to Butrus; and, a day or two after, came a dinner-invitation to the Doctor, the Hakeem and lady, and myself. The Hakeem was otherwise occupied, but the rest of us went. A short walk through the gardens brought us to a neat one-storied cottage of hewn stone, flat-roofed and substantial, like all the dwellings of Beirut. Our host received us at the door, and, humoring the occasion, welcomed us with much verbal syllabub and whipped-cream of his complimentary language. His wife, with taper fingers on the embroidered bosom of her jacket, echoed the salutatory extravagances. A low divan soothed us with its cushions while we talked and awaited the dinner. "You will excuse the presence of my spouse," said our host with mock humility. "In true Eastern custom, I ought to make her wait on the guests, and eat

at the second table ; but as one of the invited is a lady, I shall take the liberty of putting my wife down with us. In the mean time, the house is yours, and everything it contains."

A round table, four feet in diameter and a foot high, was set in the middle of the room, and spread with Arab dishes. Cushions were put around it for each of us, and we laboriously placed ourselves. The Doctor, unaccustomed to taking his provender cross-legged, soon gave signs of keeling over ; whereupon, a reinforcement of cushions was piled against his back, after the fashion of buttresses to a falling cathedral. Thanks to innumerable travelers, who have eaten and drunken in the East, everybody knows what an Eastern dinner is ; and I shall therefore avoid being prolix over pilau, stuffed lamb, boiled wheat, dried figs, pine seeds, and pistachio nuts. One word, however, must be said on the subject of *kibbch*, or the Syrians would never forgive me for contempt of their national dish. *Kibbeh*, as I remember it, is composed of boiled, cracked wheat, pounded into a mass with the admixture of a small portion of meat, and vehemently

flavored with onions and other energetic condiments. It is an indigestible, strong-odored conglomerate, not usually agreeable, on first acquaintance, to the palate of a foreigner. I gave it up after two or three mouthfuls, and wished that I had left even those where I found them. The Doctor, however, was staunch, and ate *kibbeh* as if he had been weaned on it. The dinner went on famously, and we brought to at last among the figs and pine-seeds. "O, learned man," said our host, addressing the Doctor, "I hope that you have not finished your dinner."

"Not quite," responded the Doctor. "I think I could take another small piece of your *kibbeh*."

The piece was accordingly served out, and disappeared in the twinkling of a jack o' lantern. "O learned man!" said Butrus, "the *kibbeh* seems to be to your taste. It makes me very happy. I pray you take another small piece."

"Not a bit more," answered the Doctor, with a satisfied wave of the hand.

"If you will eat no more for your own sake," continued Butrus, "I entreat you to eat a morsel for my sake."

“I shall not be wanting in that politeness,” said the Doctor, munching anew at the *kibbeh*.

“And now let me entreat you to eat a piece for my wife’s sake.”

“I am always ready to sacrifice myself for a lady,” returned the Doctor, choking anew at the *kibbeh*.

“And now let me urge you to take another morsel for my daughter’s sake.”

“Of course, of course,” said the Doctor, with some signs of exhaustion; “but, as the daughter is a small one, I shall only eat a little piece on her account.”

The dinner was now over. A basin of water and a towel were handed around to cleanse the convivial fingers. As the Doctor had got stiff in the legs with crossing them, Butrus and I helped him to his feet, and we all resumed our recumbency on the divan. Then came coffee, a nargeeleh, and chibouks. The ladies and the Doctor did not smoke, but Butrus blew a cloud of grateful fragrance over the remembrance of the demolished dinner. Incited by his example, I took courage to draw a few whiffs through the green serpen-

tine tube of the nargeeleh. The long draughts necessary to extract smoke from this complicated machine, usually produce dizziness in a novice. The other end of the floor began to rise on my vision, the ceiling to gyrate: I dropped the snaky tube and lounged back on the divan until my brain had resumed its equilibrium. Subsequent experience increased the strength of my head, until I could have smoked a bazaar full of nargeelehs at once. Thus ended our "real Arab dinner." Blessings on the mouth of its suggestor, and blessings on the hands of those who prepared it!

At Beirut resides one of the best of living Arab poets, the Sheikh Nasif el Yezigy. He, too, is in the employment of the American missionaries, as corrector for their press. Books, already roughly translated, are given over to him, so that all foreign idioms shall be strained out; for the Sheikh ignores every language but his own copious Arabic. He seems to be peculiarly adapted by nature for the enunciation of that most difficult tongue; and its deep gutturals gurgle in his larynx with the naturalness of bears and hyenas growling in a menagerie.

He composes in prose with great facility, his periods being equally admired by the Arabs for their rhythm and their perspicuity. He tells a story well, cocking his turban significantly when the climax is attained ; and delights in personal anecdotes, always giving the genealogy of his hero to the third and fourth generation. He is a writer of some celebrity in his own land ; has studied medicine in the older authors, acknowledging no authority later than Galen and Avicenna ; is a respectable jurist in Islamic law, and, what is more, is a man of much kindly feeling, a good neighbor, and an universal peace-maker.

A small volume of his poetry has been published at Beirut very lately. Like almost all his brother poets in modern Arabistan, he has not put forth one piece which is not either a lament over some one's beloved dead, or a compliment to the living great or good. From one ode, addressed to an American friend, who was about to leave Syria for his native country, I extract what seem to me the best passages :

“ We are going to the dead, treading upon the dead,
Strewed over earth like scatterings of dust ;

For could we separate earth's particles,
Half her soil would appear but crumblings of ruins.
Ah ! this world is not a house to abide in,
Where the traveler alights in the darkness.
Parting joins meeting, until
Comes that parting which is followed by no meeting.
I say to him who is now parting from his band,
What hearts have you taken, and what left behind ?
You take these our hearts, a sacred trust ; care well for
them,
O best of all trust-holders !
Peace be upon you, and just recompense, whether
You abide in the East or West !
Could we forget what that pure hand has planted,
The fresh fruit would remind us of it.
We shall have longings for you. Will
Our patience last as long as your absence ? [with him ?
O friends ! what men among you have made ready to go
And whose heart remains behind ?
Count him not a man voyaging in a ship,
But a sea walking on a sea.
Of this parting you know the time :
Do you know the time of re-union ?
This full moon has gone to his westing—
That he rise on the East, help him by prayer."

The Hakeem has translated each line in the Arabic by a correspondent line of English. He tells me, that where the Sheikh talks of his friend being a " sea," he is simply using a figurative Eastern expression for a learned man, or a man of vast and varied capacities. It is his opinion, and mine also, that when the

above passage is read straight through after the manner of prose, it is as striking, and sounds as original as much of what is called good epistolary poetry in our own language. It is also the Hakeem's persuasion, that the verses read better in their native rhymes than in alien prose. As a specimen of the Sheikh's stories, take the following: A certain priest named Aasa Shedoody, whose father's name was Daood Shedoody, and whose grandfather was called Habeeb el Hakeem of Shemlan, was famous for his gluttony, as priests are apt to be. One day, being in appetite as usual, he came upon a poor peasant woman, who was baking bread at an out-of-door oven by the wayside. "God bless your morning, daughter," said the holy and hungry man, stopping short at the sight of the thin, fresh loaves.

"May he prosper your morning, good father," replied the woman. "Honor the baking. Please eat some hot bread."

"God increase your bounty, daughter," mumbled the priest, with his mouth full. And as the last morsel went down his throat, he added: "The bread is good."

“God make you always pleased with us,” said the flattered woman. “Take another loaf.”

“A blessing on your hands, daughter!” ejaculated the good man, finishing the second loaf and reaching for a third one.

“*Your* hands be blessed, father! I am glad you have come to-day,” said the alarmed house-keeper, as she saw her family stores disappear so rapidly into the capacious stomach of her spiritual shepherd. And so eating and compliment sat cheek-by-jowl until the priest had swallowed the whole baking, except a single loaf. He then rose, excusing himself from eating any more by reason of an engagement. “But,” said the woman, “your reverence will bless the baking before you go.”

“Certainly, daughter.” (Here Sheikh Nasif cocks his turban.) “O! thou who didst multiply the few small loaves until thousands were satiated and baskets of fragments remained—”

“Lucky for Him you were not there, good father!” burst in the indignant woman. “You would have put him to the blush for want of sufficient provisions.”

One fine morning the Hakeem invited me to accompany him in a visit to the family mansion of the House of Susa. A short ride through sandy alleys, between hedges of prickly pear brought us to the gate of a long, low, solidly-constructed mansion. Dismounting and entering, we found ourselves in an oblong court, gay with flower-beds, and faced on one side by a columned verandah. The blue-eyed Aseen was not there; but we were received by three of her female relatives. One was a respectable old lady, the mother of the family; another was a pleasing young woman, the wife of one of the sons. The third, a tall, slender girl of about seventeen, with aquiline features and lustrous almond-shaped eyes, was a bride soon to be married. She picked a large flower from one of the loaded stalks, and handed it to me, saying that she was rejoiced to see me safe across the ocean. As ignorance of her speech made me mute, the Hakeem translated my gratitude into Arabic by invoking a “blessing on her fingers.” She had the same slow, almost sensual, walk that I have already noticed in the women of Syria.

These ladies were not so fair as our friend Aseen ; but not darker than the majority of people in America. Blonde complexions and blue eyes are a family mark of the Bait Susa ; and I often wondered if they were not descended from some flaxen-haired old German or English crusader. On Mt. Lebanon, fair skins, blue eyes, and light or even auburn locks, are not uncommon, and result, no doubt, from the altitude and the temperate climate. ' The Bait Susa was, perhaps, originally a mountain family, or has been often infused with the clear blood of highland brides. A surfeit of compliments, some details about my voyage, and an offer of coffee brought us to the end of our visit.

I was told, the other day, that this Bait Susa is still flourishing, and still counts in its brotherhood some of the most respectable merchants of Beirut. Sultana was placed, some time after my departure, in a school conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. Her parents were anxious to give her a European education ; but their project was upset by the unlucky hand of an overzealous Jesuit. The good father, with a large folio under his arm, was passing through the

school, when his searching eye caught Sultana in some petty piece of mischief. Lifting the folio with sudden indignation, he brought it down on the child's head, and nearly knocked her off her seat. Sultana was sick in consequence ; papa and mamma were exceedingly indignant ; and the Jesuit never got another chance to pummel her with copies of the holy fathers. She is now twelve years old, a passably pretty girl, and engaged to be married.

IV.

TO JERUSALEM.

BUT visits and dinners were soon forgotten in preparations for our journey to Jerusalem. A party was formed, consisting of the Doctor, the chaplain of a British frigate, an American who had been two years resident in the country, and myself. As the said American spoke Arabic and even some Turkish, we voted him interpreter, and, in fact, Grand Sachem of the expedition. Four very respectable horses were engaged for the occasion, two mules, two donkeys, two drivers, a cook, and hostler, and a kind of steward, or head waiter. The American missionaries lent us a tent, and also a couple of traveling bedsteads, so contrived that a man could fold them up and carry them (very inconveniently) under his arm. Not being family affairs, they would only accommodate one slumberer apiece ; and the other two of our party were obliged to content themselves with tarpaulins to keep the rheumatism out of their dreams.

And one fine morning in early March we had everything packed up, called our tribe together, mounted our horses, and set out for the holy city. "God preserve your eyes!" shouted beggars with sore optics or none at all, as we rode by them. "God keep your children!" screamed women, holding out disgusting babies to attract our pecuniary commiseration. "God give you!" roared the unlucky ones who had no ostensible title to pity except their dirt and tatters. "O God!" shouted the servants, as they urged each other to hasten. "God!" yelled the muleteers to their stumbling donkeys. Canaan, the chief butler, hurrying and worrying his subordinates, zig-zagged here and there under the load of a barbarous blunderbuss. Skinny, grizzly old Abu Yusef, the cook, screamed right and left, uninterruptedly, from the summit of a mule-load of kitchen utensils. Half-witted Habeeb, the horse-boy, nearly lost the remainder of his senses in trying to obey a dozen orders at once. Above the whole tumult rose from time to time the grand voice of the Sagamore, like a clear trumpet, admonishing of something ill-adjusted, or something forgotten.

But things began to get right at last, and our confusion confounded gradually settled into a tranquil, sober-paced caravan. Canaan wiped the sweat from his sun-burnt forehead, and climbed to a seat astride of the tent and carpet-bags. Abu Yusef diminished his screams until they came, like angels' visits, few and far between. Habeeb settled into an easy dog-trot, looking up in our faces at every fourth step with an enormous grin of silly good-nature and enjoyment. The Moslem drivers ceased punching and blaspheming their mules, and, vaulting on their donkeys, encouraged them to progress with an occasional grunt and a convulsive heel-dig in the belly. The shadow of the last villa slipped off our horses' tails ; the green of the gardens yellowed into shifting sandiness ; and we found ourselves on an uninhabited piny level, with the sea to our right and Mt. Lebanon to our left. What a glorious excitement it was ! what a day precious and unforgetable ! Oh, how we laughed ! and how the waves and the mountains and the very broad-faced sun seemed to laugh, also, with a hearty jocose appreciation of the humor of the scene ! Nature

has revealed to me that she sympathizes with every soul who sympathizes with her; and that, when we believe that she weeps with our sorrows and smiles with our gladness, she does so weep and does so smile. And this revelation has fallen to me, not on this occasion only, but on others, so that I put confidence in it, although too often with only a cloudy and dream-like credence.

Two hours' riding brought us to a swift little river, where the muleteers had to bestow countless cuffs and verbal indignities on their animals before they could prevail on them to wade across. A party of Moslems, coming from the other side, met us in the middle of the stream. One of them, a handsome white-turbaned man, held out his hand to me as we splashingly passed each other. Shake hands! thought I. Who ever hoped to meet an Arab who knew how to shake hands? I reached towards him, fully expecting to enjoy a hearty grip and a home-like digital wag. But, instead of grasping my hand, he lightly drew his fingers through the palm, and then raised them to his lips and his forehead. I instinctively imitated his motions, and

found afterwards that I had followed the rules of the most elegant Syrian courtesy.

That night we slept at the very place where Jonah was pitched ashore by the whale, sea serpent, or whatever other fish it was that swallowed him. So, at least, says tradition, and so said an old fellow who kept a khan near by, who ought to know, for he looked aged enough to remember it. Every one, who has seen this old Sheikh Abdullah, must recollect his odd figure and distressing psalmody. Lean, haggard, hump-backed, lame of one leg, he presented very much such a figure as one might imagine the runaway prophet to have been when first landed from his narrow traveling quarters in the whale's belly. Some one having repeated in his presence a couplet of Arabic verse, the old fellow proved as responsive and sonorous as catgut, and twanged away in such dolorous style that all hands were put under bonds to quote no more poetry until out of hearing of the Sheikh.

The old gentleman levies contributions occasionally on his compatriots, displaying in this business an equal degree of perseverance

and ingenuity. He one day paid a visit to the house of one of the mountain nobility, and demanded some money "for the honor of the prophet Jonah." The Druse lord was absent, and his wife endeavored to escape the tax by averring that there was not a piaster in the house. After teasing with immense importunity to no purpose, old Abdullah changed his tactics. Munching a piece of dry bread, he marched through some newly finished upper rooms with a look of intense admiration, and finally broke into audible soliloquy. "A fine house! a very fine house! But there are who envy its owner, and they are among his relatives."

"Take this," said the woman, hurriedly. "I have found a little money; take this and go in peace."

The Sheikh stuck the piasters in his girdle and departed, invoking a blessing in the name of the Most High.

Now, what caused the sudden alarm of the Druse lady? She believed in the *evil eye*. Many Syrians dislike to hear unmixed praise bestowed upon a child or favorite horse or house,

lest envy should be excited, and somebody's malignant optics should smite the coveted possession with a curse. Often a few beads are put round the neck of a boy or pretty girl, or a fine horse, or an egg is suspended in the arched doorway of a new house, or a defect is purposely left in a splendid room, in order to attract the attention of gazers, and ward off the evil influence. Mention of the name of the Deity is equally effectual, if done at the time. This superstition exists chiefly among the Moslems. Cunning old Sheikh Abdullah had given audible and unmixed praise of the house, and had hinted at the envy of relatives. The frightened mistress quickly found means to bribe him from such dangerous observations, and set him to calling upon God.

We slept in this sagacious ancient's hostelry, and very fat his fleas must have been for a week after. The annoyance caused by these vivacious animals to the Eastern traveler is almost insupportable; and the disagreeable consciousness of their restless pilgrimages and vigorous burrowings, often destroys the effect of the finest ruin or landscape. How can a man think about

Joshua or the valley of Jehoshaphat, when fifty indefatigable little bores are sharply reminding him of the actual and suffering present? Humanity pauses for a reply. In the helplessness of his rage, the bitten tourist seeks consolation in thinking of the infinity of nature, by which even these diminutive tormentors are furnished with still more dwarfish persecutors.

“Great fleas have little fleas,
And these have less to bite 'em ;
These fleas have lesser fleas,
And so, *ad infinitum.*”

What an animalcule of satisfaction there is in that thought! What an infinitesimal triumph of proxied vengeance! The very creature, whose tormenting existence remains to you an unsolved problem, is restless o' nights with the same kind of puncturings, and wonders what *his* fleas were made for.

Sunrise, the fresh air, a prospect of waves, and green slopes, brought relief, and started us in high spirits on our journey. A verdant level, flanked by Mediterranean tides on one hand, and Galilean hills on the other, was the scene of our day's riding. We passed Sidon and Sarepta, and slept on the plain of Tyre,

not far from the ancient and renowned city. No populous floors beneath us now, no gloomy vaultings above; nothing but the cold ground for a couch, and a thin, fluttering canvas for a covering. There is something glorious in pitching one's tent, and lying down to rest under its nomad and fragile shelter. The stars peeping through openings in the canvas, the noise of waves drowsily murmuring on sand-beaches, the cool caresses of the night air stealing through our curtains, all made that sinking to sleep strangely delicious and reposeful. Suddenly we heard a shrill distant clamor rising and falling like waves on the distance, and mingled of various and antagonizing sounds. Sometimes it was the yelping of beaten curs, sometimes the laughter and shouts of children, sometimes the shrieks and waiflings of women. I concluded it to be a squabble among the bipeds or quadrupeds of the neighboring village, and, turning anew to my slumber, resolved to let them settle it for themselves. "What is that, Brother Soandso?" said one of my tent-mates, sleepily sticking his head out of the folds of his Arab quilt.

“That is the cry of the jackals,” coolly answered our well-traveled Sagamore.

“You don’t say so, Brother Soandso!” gasped the other, now as broad awake as a midnight owl.

“Indeed, I do,” insisted the Sagamore, in a take-it-easy tone.

“Now really, Brother Soandso, you don’t mean to say so,” repeated the first speaker, half throwing off his coverlet, in a fit of droll anxiety for his person.

“Why, yes I do; certainly I do. I have heard such concerts a thousand times.”

“But, Brother Soandso, don’t you think they are very near us?”

“Near us. Well, what if they are? They are the most harmless cowards in the world. They would get out of your way much faster than you could possibly get out of theirs.”

The other listened a few moments to the melancholy psalmody, and then covered himself up again, evidently not at ease in his mind. Fatigue sent him to sleep soon after, and he waked up in the morning to find that he had been bitten by nothing larger than usual; but

I have little doubt that he dreamed of being treed by a whole wilderness of caterwauling jackals.

What is the use of being garrulous about our journey, and describing the whole land from Dan to Beersheba. We averaged twenty or twenty-five miles per diem, stopped as long as we pleased at Nazareth, Tiberias, and Samaria, and managed to reach Jerusalem in about eight days. The muleteers smoked and swore intermittently, and administered to their beasts a course of several thousand kicks and punches. Canaan carried his absurd blunderbuss without cessation, bought our provisions, and settled accounts every night with the Sagamore. Abu Yusef stuck to his mule like a papoose to his board, and refreshed us with tea in the morning, and with very greasy mutton, rice, and onions, at night. Habeeb grinned the whole way uninterruptedly, when he was not singing or quarreling with Abu Yusef. The Arab singing is a wild quavering trill, which sounds very much as if the performer was being shaken at the time by a giant, or a grizzly bear, or a saw-mill, or anything else excessively strong, un-

easy and ill-tempered. Habeeb was a master in this style, and twanged out notes which seemed to be fairly alive with fever and ague.

His chronic misunderstanding with Abu Yusef came to a crisis near Samaria, where the whole affair was solemnly sifted and settled by our capable chieftain. Habeeb's contract with us was, that he should go to Jerusalem on foot, hold the horses when any one dismounted, tend them at night, and do any little odd jobs that might be required of him. He was, in short, the light-infantry, or rather, the sole-infantry of our brigade. His salary consisted of his victuals, six cents a day, or thereabouts, in cash, and the promise of a bucksheesh at the end of our pilgrimage. The poor fellow's duties were fatiguing, and he gratefully straddled the back of any beast whose rider was for the time wearied of the saddle. Canaan often dismounted, and gave up his post, on the tent and carpet-bags, to his humbler comrade. But Abu Yusef had no such bowels of compassion, and clung to his pack-saddle like Dandy Jack to a hand-organ. Consequently, the old fellow became a perfect eye-sore to Habeeb, who only

waited a proper opportunity to discharge upon him his indignation and contempt. On the fifth and sixth days of our journey, we heard a clattering crash behind us, followed by shrieks and screams of triumphant laughter. The kitchen mule had gone on to his nose ; and there lay old Abu Yusef in a perfect wreck of spoons, tin platters, and dinner traps of all descriptions. Around the ruin and the prostrate form of his enemy danced the exulting Habeeb, shouting and capering with the noisiness and vivacity of a hum-top. Canaan and the mule-teers rushed to the rescue ; Abu Yusef and his plates were picked up, and the mule, with the aid of a few pokes, picked herself up. Habeeb, under a tempest of shrieking opprobrium from the indignant old man, shrunk away to the rear, and took especial pains to keep out of the sight of our Sagamore. But a fearful reckoning was at hand. Abu Yusef nursed his wrath with various grunts and sniffs, until we reached our tenting-place, when he came and laid the immense burden of his griefs at the feet of the collective Khowajat. The Sagamore was appointed judge and jury ; Canaan was called in

as witness, and the culprit was summoned to stand his trial. Grinning long-legged Habeeb, and thin grizzly Abu Yusef, sitting on their hams in the door of the tent, burst into a torrent of mutual accusations and impertinences, and had to be summarily hushed up. Keeping a menacing finger lifted, to impose silence on the two enemies, the Sagamore called on Canaan to tell the story, which he did with considerable prolixity. Habeeb was fully convicted of having exulted in the misfortune of the company's cook and the company's platters, and, thus, of being a traitor in heart to the company's interests. He was accordingly condemned to ask pardon of the Khowajat, and to do penance by kissing the hand of Abu Yusef. He was, also, severely admonished for having called the Doctor and myself *moosh tyceb*, that is, *not good*, because we favored him with fewer rides than the Chaplain and the Sagamore. Habeeb took off his greasy skull-cap and humbled himself before us, raised the old kitchener's shriveled hand to his lips, and then looked around with a discomfited grin like that of a whipped monkey. The judge now tumbled the rest of the court

out of the tent ; and, shortly after, we heard them enjoying the fag-end of the quarrel over their supper. Habeeb was completely beaten, and, during the rest of the journey, manifested a becoming respect for the company, even to its spoons and pewter.

At Nablous, or Shechem, we looked into the profundities of Jacob's well, and also had some experience of the depth of Syrian craftiness and forethought. The famous excavation where the patriarch drew water still exists outside of the city, but is now as dry as a rum cask under the exhaustive operation of the Maine Law. Thither we went in sweating pilgrimage, and found it, after some trouble, by the aid of a bare-legged, villainous-faced Nablousian. The mouth of the well was hidden by a low earth-covered vaulting, erected, probably, to prevent the cavity from being filled up with rubbish. There was one opening through the masonry, large enough to admit a man, but, very inconveniently for us, plugged up with a heavy stone. Resolute to effect an entrance, we commenced battering at this, with other stones, like a set of two-legged catapults. Our guide

assisted us strenuously, while two or three desert Arabs, sporting long feather-pennoned lances, stood by and gazed at us with listless curiosity. The obstacle at last gave way, crashing sullenly into the vault; and the Sagamore and I warily descended after it. There was perfect darkness for a moment, and then we could see the black mouth of the well, opening, as it were, into the sombre depths of antiquity. Tying a pebble to a long cord, we let it down, until, at the end of seventy-five feet, it chinked against thirsty stones at the bottom. We clambered out soon, choked with heat, and fearful, too, that the nomadic outsiders might take a fancy to cork us up there and see how long we would keep. We gave our guide a reasonable bucksheesh, but the rascal was not satisfied. After quarreling a long time over it, he turned to his desert brethren, and showed them the piasters. "See how I am paid," said he. "And these foreigners are as rich as Solomon. Make them give me some more." The Bedaween grinned as if it would be a good joke, but shook their heads and leaned lazily on their lances. We left Barelegs in

the dumps, but he soon turned the tables on us. Before we had got ten paces distant, he had stuck another monstrous stone into the mouth of the vault. Our Sagamore ran back and scolded furiously, upon which the fellow offered to pull the stone out for a piaster, and then laughed to think how sagaciously he had secured a job from the next curious traveler.

Not far from Jerusalem we came upon our old acquaintance of the steamer, the fat Russian lady. We were rapidly passing a crowd of pilgrims, huddled for repose under the shadowy lee of some ruinous edifice, when a sharp scream of delight attracted our attention. We looked, and there she was in all her fat rosiness, both hands extended, and a smile like a sunrise shining on her broad face. The Doctor and I checked our horses a moment; but the rest of our party were far ahead, and the Sagamore was hurrying on after his customary furious fashion. With one wave of the hand, therefore, and a shout of *Jerusalem!* we loosened our bridles and rode on our way. As we rattled down a sharp declivity, a parting message in Russian came after us, and I have little doubt

that it was some sort of a polar blessing. I looked in vain for the Head Shepherd; not a tag of his fleecy raiment was anywhere visible. I never saw either of them afterwards, but they have large and jolly corners in my memory.

Seated on a rocky hill, and surrounded by a wilderness of other hills, stands Jerusalem the fallen. As our eyes beheld it suddenly from the north, it seemed the city of destruction in a land of desolation. Not a house, not a cultivated field, and scarcely a tree relieved the dreary monotony which rolled barrenly to its very walls. Further on, indeed, a few olive orchards lifted their pallid verdure, and thin harvests waved a scanty mockery of famine over the terraces of the rapidly descending hillsides. But in general the land is bald and yellow, stricken, as it were, with old age; and the abundant sunlight, changed from a blessing into a poison, bakes and scorches its mournful unprofitableness. Over broad glaring rocks, over herbless earth, over stones from ruined walls, over the fragments of fallen terraces, we rode to the gates of her who slew the Prophets. A few wandering figures sprinkled that solemn silence, looking

like fugitives and remnants from some by-gone and vanished populousness.

Our thoughts, which had rambled into the past, were sharply recalled at the gateway by an adventure which brayed sonorously of the present. A tall, grave Turkish officer, dressed in the blue frock-coat and straight trowsers of his uniform, advanced to our Sagamore and bade him dismount. "For what reason?" asked our resolute chieftain, without offering to stir from his saddle.

"A new system of passports has been instituted, and yours must be examined."

"Who has ordered it?"

"His Excellency, the pasha."

"Well, send the pasha to me!" thundered the Sagamore; and, putting spurs to his horse, he pranced on over the clattering pavement. Our whole company followed, not understanding the confabulation, and supposing that all differences had been settled righteously. Officers and soldiers fell back in round-mouthing wonder, and questioned who the mighty Howadji might be who could dare to send for the pasha.

After various inquiries and ambulations, we reached an unoccupied house belonging to the extinct American Mission in Jerusalem, and took possession of it. A quiet little court and four rooms around it furnished us with barracks for our company. Our first business was to pay off and get rid of our mules and muleteers; our next, to pay off and get rid of our innumerable and worrysome fleas. We spread our Arab quilts and our spare clothes in the yard, and left them to the cleansing ardor of the merciless sunshine. I learned, to my astonishment, that these venomous little wretches cannot bear intense heat, when I saw them struggling weakly out of every seam and perishing on the scorching stones like exhausted travelers on an ardent Sahara. In three hours the sun had accomplished his work, and the field of hot battle was strewed with the fat corpses of the vanquished.

We now settled ourselves peaceably in our quarters; appropriated certain tables and benches as bedsteads, and established our servants in a kitchen at one end of the court. And for ten days, while we remained in Jeru-

salem, did Abu Yusef nourish us indefatigably on mutton and onions and rice. Our only fellow-holder of the premises was an antiquarian mouse, who, after forty-eight hours of zealous labor in the bottom of the wall of my sleeping-room, succeeded in fairly bringing to light, and rolling on the open floor, an indisputable specimen of ancient mosaic.

V.

JERUSALEM AND JERICHO.

THE first, last, and chiefest thing that we did at Jerusalem was, of course, to see it. We went regularly through it, and then around it, and visited all the holy and unholy places with which it is crowded. We saw the valley of Jehoshaphat and the valley of Hinnom, the tombs of the kings and the tombs of Islamite saints, the place where Christ was buried, and the place from whence the earth was taken to make Adam. A shaven monk showed us Mount Calvary in the second story of his church ; and a gray-bearded Moslem showed us a hole in the Mount of Olives, which, he said, went as far as Bagdad. There is such an air of absurdity about most of the sacred localities and traditions which abound at Jerusalem, that they excite unbelief and irreverence rather than faith and devotion. These subjects, however, have been so widely

and thoroughly discussed, that all the world knows them ; and I shall, therefore, confine myself to my customary chit-chat about traveling companions and adventures.

During one of our promenades, the Sagamore signalized himself by a second assault and battery upon the conceited prejudices of the Moslems. We were beneath the wall of Jerusalem ; at our feet yawned the valley of Jehoshaphat ; on the other side towered the Mount of Olives. Above us, but hidden by the lofty rampart, was the holy place where stood the temple of Solomon, and where stands the Mosque of Omar. Projecting from one of the highest layers in the wall, was the gigantic fragment of a column which Mohammed will bestride when he judges the nations and peoples, in the valley below. The steep sides of the chasm were flecked by thousands of Jewish graves, mementoes of men who had wandered here from all parts of the earth, to die in the holy city. Around our listless feet gleamed the haughtier tombstones of the believers in Mohammed. As we strode on along the base of the wall, we met three or four white-robed and white-turbaned Moslems. One

of them, a handsome man of about forty, with dark, flashing eyes, and aquiline features, gazed on us in great anger, and motioned us, with violent gestures, to go down into the ordinary road. Our Sagamore pressed coolly on, without noticing his contemptuous dumb-show. "Descend!" said the Moslem. "Descend from here! Descend into the road!"

"Why so?" asked the Sagamore.

"Our customs do not permit a Nazarene to walk in this place."

"Our customs permit me to walk anywhere that I can," responded our sachem; and on he stalked, right by the speechless wrath which glared from under the white turbans. The American eagle soars in the face of the sun, and is not to be scared by the horsetails of a dilapidated crescent.

The most extraordinary incident which occurred during my stay, was of a character calculated to shame and scandalize a Christian, and, speaking within bounds, to encourage a Turk to remain a Turk. On the anniversary of the burial of our Lord, a procession takes place in the enormous Church of the Holy

Sepulchre, symbolizing all the events of that sacred night, from the taking down from the cross to the inhumation at the tomb. As the edifice is composed of nineteen different chapels, divided among Catholics, Greeks, Armenians, Copts, and perhaps one or two other sects, each of these bodies takes its turn, and is for the time permitted to make use of the holy localities held by the others. Now the Greek reckoning of time, as everybody knows, is twelve days behind the Catholic, and consequently they celebrate the descent and the burial twelve days later. If both sects were good-natured and tolerant towards their supposedly erring brethren, this circumstance would greatly facilitate the said processions, as it takes away all chance of their wanting the same altars at the same time. But, as both not only feel sure that they are right, but get furious at seeing anybody else wrong, they would be at annual loggerheads on the question, did not the Turks insist upon their showing mutual accommodation to each other's prejudices and piety. Sometimes, however, the old animosity gets the better of prudence, and exhibits itself in apostolic blows and

knocks, as was the case when I had the honor to be present.

It was evening, and the hour of the Roman Catholics. Beneath scores of precious hanging lamps trod an archbishop, bishops, long trains of monks, and hundreds of devotees. Bearing weighty lighted candles, chanting solemn anthems, the procession unwound itself slowly from the remotest, dimmest recesses of the church. Over the stony floor, by the chapel of the sepulchre, the rustling footfalls went until they reached the stairway to the Mount Calvary which tradition has consecrated. The wailing music became fainter as the chorus of monks rose to the summit, and the mass of votaries poured on behind them, filling the elevated oratory to overflowing. I tried to gain admittance with the last of the procession, but finding it impossible, I mounted a sort of pediment to obtain a view of them when they should come down. On one side of me stood the Sagamore, and on the other a six-foot Ohioan, attended by a diminutive native secretary to one of the foreign consulates at Beirut. There we remained, comparing observations and senti-

ments, while, unknown to us, the tragi-comedy commenced above. From the tonsured ranks, advanced a Catholic prelate, bearing a cloth crimsoned to represent the stains of blood, which he was about to spread over the altar. "Hold!" said a Greek priest, stepping forward. "Christ is not yet dead. It is twelve days still to the true date of his burial. You shall not profane our altar with that lying emblem."

The Latin, without deigning a reply to these schismatic observations, coolly placed the cloth where it belonged. The Greek, justly indignant at such sacrilege, immediately seized it and threw it on the floor. A zealous monk, outrageous at this desecration of holy things, raised his huge wax candle and knocked the impious interloper sprawling. Scores of Greeks, who had smuggled themselves into the chapel, instantly drew out weighty sticks, which they had concealed for such an emergency in their baggy trowsers, and commenced pummeling their heretical brethren with convincing zeal. The hostilities were so unexpected, the attack so vigorous, that the rout of the Catholics was sudden and complete. Our quar-

tet at the bottom heard first a dull, confused uproar, which sharpened into indubitable howls and yells, and swelled rapidly to a hoarse, far-resounding tumult of battle and flight. Stragglers came down the stairs with slow doubtfulness ; increasing numbers hurried wildly after them, and soon it was one choked, descending rush of bishops, monks, and laymen, struggling downwards with uncommon eagerness and perturbation. Some, evidently launched vigorously from above, drifted down, bows foremost, stern foremost, broadside on, over the heads of their fellows. The archbishop, in particular, showed himself a master of ground and lofty tumbling, and made but one roll of it from the top to the bottom. Down came the discomfited Catholics in hurry and worry ; and after them, plying their sticks, and shouting enthusiastical- ly, pelted the victorious Greeks. The riot reached the pavement at our feet ; seemed to go out for a moment ; and then, catching at the heels of the fugitives, relighted and spread away, like a conflagration, into every broad space and narrow corner of the church. Turkish officers shouted themselves hoarse in useless

attempts to restore order ; and frantic janizaries, armed with enormous cowhides, belabored indiscriminately everybody who came within reach. The combatants, with a glorious self-devotion, paid no attention to these carnal disturbances in the rear, and pegged away at each other with a moving fervor and sturdiness. The small Arab secretary, all abroad and agitated at the first uproar, grew more and more scared as the riot got nearer him, and was now fairly hysterical with terror. Catching hold of the skirts of his long companion, he pulled vigorously at them, and shouted in shrill, frightened tones : “ *Late us go ! late us go !* ” “ No, no ! ” roared the other, jerking away his broadcloth, and dropping the little fellow remorselessly into the struggling mob of discussionists. It was a free fight evidently, and the Buckeye looked as if he almost had a mind to go into it fists and heels. Had he done so, I am sure that he would have made a sensation even in that energetic manual debating-club. The secretary hopped through the crowd like a robin-red-breast through stubble, and we saw him disappear in the direction of the door.

A moment later, clusters of keen bayonets glittered in the same quarter; dark uniforms and sullen bronzed faces lowered under them, and two companies of Turkish soldiers burst trampling into the edifice. Every dog has his day in Turkey, as well as otherwheres; and now it was the turn of the Greek dogs to be pummeled and to run. We could see, in almost any direction among the aisles and chapels, a troop of infidels in full chase of some scampering champion of the faith, like a pack of cats after a mouse. I observed two of the soldiers dragging a particularly troublesome rioter across the floor by the heels, while a third was pounding at the unlucky polemic's ribs with the butt of his musket, as though he were staving in the head of a barrel. If that pugnacious disciple laughed for a month after without feeling his sides go lame, I am a very poor judge of the effects of vigorously handled gun-breeches. Under such energetic discipline, the conflicting emotions of the devotees rapidly subsided, and the uproar relapsed into a low hum of murmuring timid voices. The governor of Jerusalem appeared, and declared that the

Catholics should resume and finish their procession in his presence. The soldiers preliminarily put all the Greeks out of doors, to insure their good behavior during service. Canaan, who, hearing of the riot, had come ordered to find us, was seized by an officer and ordered to make his exit. He cried out, pointing to me, that there was his master and that I wanted him; but the Turk was deaf to reason. I saw the disagreement, and was frankly surprised to find that a single motion of my finger was sufficient to secure respect and save my follower from expulsion. Fifty years ago I might have been bundled out, too, with a quickening application of cowhides and musket-breeches in case of any dilatoriness. By this time it was after midnight; and, as we had seen enough to satisfy our curiosity, we did not wait to witness the end of the procession. We walked home, having enjoyed an unexpected opportunity of observing the church militant in action, as the modern Greeks understand it. Such scenes will end, I suppose, when the altars are changed into pulpits, the gold and silver lamps are melted into a school-fund, and the

church is furnished with pews and lighted with gas.

I met with one severe fright at Jerusalem ; indeed, I think that I never was more alarmed in my life. In one corner of the city, in wretched huts set apart for them, lived a festered and loathsome population of lepers. They were not many in number, but so woe-ful, diseased, and outcast that they made that corner a horrible place to me, worse than a thousand valleys of the sons of Hinnom. When I found where they usually wandered, I never went near them, and lived in constant watch-fulness lest one of them should surprise me unawares. Their malady, they say, is contagious ; and I had a fear of treading upon the very earth which they had touched. But one day, as we rode out to Bethlehem, we came upon a dozen of them outside of the walls, sitting in desolate banishment from humanity.

✓ Clothed in rags, with scaly and filthy skins, limbs swelled by the poison of their horrible disease, toes, fingers, noses, and even eyes eaten away by its intensity, thy looked like incarnations of the pestilences which ravage

mankind. At our approach, they set up inarticulate screams for pity, and rushed among us holding up their awful hands to attract our attention. They were upon us before we knew it, and threw our whole party into a panic. Scared out of my senses lest they should touch me, I drove spurs into my powerful horse and burst away down the hill at full gallop. "Get out! That's a pretty set of fingers to stick in a man's face," roared the Doctor, as, making his animal rear and plunge, he scattered the lepers like skirmishers before a charge of cavalry. Our Sagamore, more accustomed to such horrors, retained his self-possession, and distributed a few piasters among these most miserable of the miserable. The Doctor also pulled up near enough to add something to the contribution; observing, however, that they mustn't stick their fingers in his face any more; quite an unnecessary caution, as I doubt whether there was a finger in the whole company. Poor Canaan! little did I think then that he would now be consuming with the same terrible, hopeless malady.

It was about a week after our arrival at

Jerusalem that we witnessed the annual bathing of the pilgrims in the Jordan; that great spring washing of the dirtiest of possible sheep in the dirtiest of possible rivers. We rose early, mounted our horses, and taking Canaan and the tent with us on a mule, sallied out of the city to join the great religious caravan. Down the steep descent to Gethsemane, along the valley of Jehoshaphat, and far around the Mount of Olives towards Bethany, stretched a sinuous irregular column of men, women, and children, attired in all costumes, from sheepskins of Liberia to silks of Damascus, thousands of them on foot, thousands, too, mounted on donkeys, mules, horses, and camels. Far in the van waved the flexible lances, feathery pennons, and loose black cloaks of Bedaween horsemen; and, nearer the city, grouped battalions of dark-uniformed Turkish infantry, leaning on their muskets and listlessly awaiting the order of advance. As we pressed by the confused mass, all babelish languages sounded in our ears, mingled with the inveterate grumbling of camels, the impatient neighing of horses, and the sonorous benedictions of honest

John Jackass. As this vociferous but well-meaning quadruped lifted up his voice amid the din, he seemed to me to be communing with himself somewhat after this fashion. "Here you are, all but me, trotting straight to a fool's Paradise. I shan't be there myself, perhaps; but go ahead and don't wait, brethren; here's my blessing. Ee—aw! ee—aw! ee—aw!"

We estimated the number of pilgrims in the procession at four or five thousand, which is about half as many as usually make the expedition to the Jordan. As all of them were Christians, the women were very carelessly veiled, and I had an opportunity of judging of the proportions of beauty and ugliness in eastern female piety. Plainness would have carried an election by an almost unanimous vote; in fact I only caught sight of one really handsome face. It was that of a girl of sixteen, fair-skinned, with regular features and large soft hazel eyes. She was mounted on a camel, with servants and relatives around her, and seemed to belong to a respectable class of society. I took her to be an Armenian, a —

nation which, to my taste, possesses the prettiest women in the orient, unless it be the almost mythical Circassians. I looked at her with the greatest interest, and longed to have something happen to her so that I might set it right and gain her heart on the spot. I pictured myself reclaiming her from pilgrimages, shrines, and the like stupidities, and sighed like a zephyr as my horse's strides left her far behind and then out of sight in the assembled confusion. We joined another party of Americans, pushed vigorously on through the rabble, and reached a bare hill in front of the column. Here we pulled up and stared at the flying guard of Bedaween Arabs who were galloping uselessly about the stony eminence with the improvidence of negroes on hired horses. One of our friends showed them a revolver, which, with sparkling appreciative eyes, they pronounced *tyib* (good), excessively *tyib*, indescribably *tyib*.

After an hour's delay, the procession started, and began to wind sluggishly onward, like an enormous variegated snake, among the bare hills, and down the hot ravines which glare

between Jerusalem and the valley of the Jordan. Looking at it from a sufficient distance, one might have imagined it to be that extra-sized old serpent, Lucifer, on a pilgrimage to weep over the ruin of his dearly-beloved Sodom and Gomorrah. A halt at noon was celebrated in the way of a mammoth pic-nic, by the seven or eight thousand bipeds and quadrupeds of the crusade. Half a battalion of Turkish infantry now passed us on an Indian trot, and took up a position in front, next to the fly-away vanguard of desert horsemen. The other half battalion remained behind, to bring up and protect the rear. A similar body of soldiers always attends the pilgrims to the Jordan, partly to keep them from mauling each other, and partly to deliver them out of the hands of the plundering Bedaween. Our present guardians, unlike the mere shambling boys whom I had seen on duty at Smyrna and Beirut, were full-grown men, with broad, solid shoulders, short but powerful limbs, and a hardy aspect. As they hurried by us, leaping vigorously over the unsteady stones of the almost pathless hillside, their trowsers rolled

up so as to expose their dark muscular legs, we all noted and admired their fine physique and action.

We reached Jericho towards nightfall, and spread our little tent amidst the boundless human and animal uproar. Supper dispatched, we walked out in the cool early evening, to visit the miraculous fountain of Elisha. Parties of lounging pilgrims, European and Oriental, appeared and disappeared around us in the soft, star-lit obscurity. Farther off prowled sinister Ishmaelite loafers, dandling their long lances and slender firelocks, and looking ready and disposed for scrimmage or pillage. We reached the clear, copious waters of the spring, and found them as sweet as if that afternoon had witnessed the miracle. A number of English travelers were gathered around it, talking over a robbery which the Bedaween had just committed on the loyal person of one of their countrymen. The sufferer was a Yorkshireman, six feet two, with enormous shoulders and limbs, the hugest of red shock heads, and a broad, blistered face, as sportive and spiritual as the physiognomy of a Cheshire cheese. A

mechanic of no education, he had inherited a large fortune, and had been seized by an unaccountable fancy to visit countries of whose historic and artistic interest he knew little more than a dromedary. Dressed in all that the Arabs had left him—a shirt and pantaloons—he related his discomfiture with a solemn gruffness, which was reasonably ludicrous: “There I was. What could I do? Seven blackguards around me, with long spears, ready to run ‘em into me bowels! What could I do? I’ll fight any man, or any ten men, give me a fair chance. But when I saw them seven spears ready to perforate me bowels, I gave up; and any man would have done the same.”

The approach of his countrymen had saved his bowels, and the remnant of his clothes, by scaring off the cautious robbers. I met this curious individual repeatedly afterwards, and am only sorry that I did not see more of him.

Having tasted of the fountain of the prophet, we adjourned to the tent of a party of Anglo-Saxons. We were scarcely seated, when a clergyman entered with an air of unutterable disgust and dismay on his features, and declared

that he had just fled from the sight of an immodest dance performed by some women of the Bedaween. Instead of congratulating him on his escape, one of our party burst out with, "Oh ! I havn't seen that. I must see that!" And away nearly the whole of us hurried to witness one of the ballets of Sodom and Gomorrah. It was too late, however ; the women had closed their performance ; and we consoled ourselves with telling stories until near midnight. The clamor of the camp gradually subsided, until no sound broke on the stillness, except the distant shrieking of jackals, the occasional tramp of a sleepless horse, and the startling, prolonged watch-cry of the Turkish sentinels.

VI.

THE JORDAN AND DEAD SEA.

At early daylight everybody was in motion, and away we all rolled in a confused mass, right by the miserable village of Rihah, towards the yet unseen Jordan. A flat plain, baked brown and cracked by the heat of the sun, like an overdone pumpkin pie, sounded hollowly under the feet of our hurrying horses. The sunrise poured its baptism of glory over the procession, as it broke upon the banks of the river, and spread eagerly up and down, to catch an immediate view of the holy waters. And now was seen one of the strangest pictures that ever superstition mosaicked out of morsels of stupid humanity. Shielding themselves behind their camels and donkeys, covering themselves in any half-decent or indecent way that hurrying circumstances permitted, the pilgrims—men, women, and children—began to strip off their clothes, and attire themselves in

loose bathing garments, like the ascension-robcs of our home-raised Millerites. Some did not even go to this unassuming pitch of modesty; and one old woman, in particular, stood there without so much as fig-leaf to hide her shriveled ugliness. I lost sight of my pretty Armenian girl, and did not see how she managed in this delicate and pressing emergency. And then all, as fast as they were equipped, scrambled enthusiastically down to the river, and soused themselves over head and ears in its soul-purifying waters. It was a wild, rushing current, as mad as any of the zealots who sought its embrace, pitching thick yellow waves in turbulent haste towards the funeral silence and apathy of the Dead Sea; a gigantic mud-puddle boiling and eddying in furious life, between banks festooned with a rich, dishevelled verdure—the only green existence in the immense barrenness of the landscape. Behind us rose the desert heights of desolated Judea; and in front lowered, as if in pagan scorn, the sullen mountains of the old, unbelieving Moabites. It was no imperilous duty to bathe in the waters of Jordan; and, even as we looked, one

man was whirled suddenly away into the engulfing current. He rose a moment to the surface; turned his wild, ghastly face towards the stupified multitudes who crowded the banks; seemed to gaze with unutterable longing upon the life from which he was drifting, and then sunk swiftly as if demons had dragged him fiercely below. His body was not recovered — not even sought for; and, doubtless, it floated into the Dead Sea, and hung there over the sepulchral depths, a death of humanity amid a death of nature.

As if to compensate for this extinction of one life, another burst into existence in the midst of the same infatuated confusion. An Armenian woman was taken in labor, while bathing, and gave birth to a child in the very waters. This incident produced a short dialogue, very characteristic of the difference between the free-spoken women of other lands and our own demure-mouthed countrywomen. “Did you witness that happy event?” said one of our party to the Sagamore; “I heard that there was a child born in the water. I did not see it, and I can hardly believe it.”

“ I saw it,” responded a silvery voice behind him. “ It is perfectly true.”

They turned their heads and beheld a fair, genteel Englishwoman, of about thirty-five, a little separated from a party of her compatriots. The two gentlemen from America came within a heart-beat, or thereabouts, of blushing: not so the stranger, who quietly returned their gaze, unconscious that she had offended any possible rule of propriety.

Americans and English, with a few others of Frank race, about thirty in all, we forced our way out of the crowd, and set off toward the junction of the Jordan with the Dead Sea. With less timidity even than they undressed, the pilgrims were now reclothing themselves, and hurriedly taking up their march on the direct road back to Jerusalem. We saw their host gradually fade over the level plain behind us, as we approached the mouth of the river, and obtained a full view of the sea of silence. Bare, brown, herbless, hot-faced mountains swept away down its coasts and met in distant hazy defiles at its southern extremity. A broad sheet of unstable mud, baked by the sun

into a tottering crust, through which our horses sank dangerously, lined the last waves of the Jordan. Turning from this perilous footing, we pushed rapidly to the west, and came upon the hard, verdureless shores of the sea.

It was now our turn to bathe. Scattering along the pebbly beach, we stripped and plunged into the glassy waters. They held us up with a dense scorn on their surface ; and those who never swam before nor since swam then. The Yorkshireman's bulky frame floated like a cork, to the unutterable amazement of its owner. He gloried in his new-found buoyancy, and splashed about in a style to scare up ghosts from the buried cities. He stuck his red head under water, and got his big mouth full of the nauseous wave of salt, brimstone and bitumen. He spit it out with great indignation, muttering :

“ Blazes ! how it tastes of Sodom and Gomorrah ! ”

He made this remarkable observation without a smile ; without looking around for an audience or approval ; as earnestly as if he had discovered a fact of first-rate historical import-

ance; yet as positively as if he had been familiar from childhood with the flavor of those celebrated towns.

We dressed again, and took our way in straggling procession up the long hot ravines which led to the distant hill-convent of Mar Saba. The donkey of an English lady fell lame on the flinty road; and she was transferred to the horse of one of the attendant Bedaween. The Arab was instructed to lead the horse and drive the donkey before him, on performance of which he was to be well paid at Mar Saba. The sun-burnt breaker of contracts soon mounted the limping ass, and left the lady to guide his own eccentric beast as she best could. An overgrown, red-faced Englishman caught him at his unfaithfulness, and made an immediate example of him in hoarse Anglo-Saxon. "You black scoundrel!" he roared, "get off from that donkey. What do you mean by crushing a poor miserable little beast that can hardly put one foot before the other? Take hold of the lady's bridle. If a man with such a long spear as that can't take care of one poor horse and one poor donkey, he ought to

be kicked. Most extraordinary impudence, by Jove! A set of scoundrelly blackguards, every one of them!"

The Arab answered not a word, but, turning his mischievous black eye, glanced slyly at a comrade, and both of them burst into a noiseless laugh. Nothing, in fact, seems to amuse a Bedawee more than to hear a Frank Howadji scold. The fellow dismounted, however, and, during the rest of the journey, led the horse and poked the donkey according to agreement.

We were further diverted by the lively presence of a little Englishman, who was externally remarkable for a pair of enormous riding-boots of scarlet leather. *Red-boots*, as everybody called him, was the vivacious, indefatigable mosquito of the party. He had the restlessness of one, if not the sting; and buzzed from ear to ear with similar perseverance and tiresomeness. Spurring his jaded hack from group to group, he bored sharply into the conversation, with a keen, irresistible impudence. He was "dying with thirst," and emptied everybody's canteen, even to the bottle of water which a

charming Swiss lady had filled from the waves of the Jordan. He blew his own little trumpet with remarkable energy and distinctness. "I never let anything pass without examination," said he.

"Do you keep a journal?" I asked.

"Yes; that is, not a very elaborate one, you know. I note down the remarkable events and places, you understand, and leave the considerations till afterwards. For, as to theology, that is a subject that I can enlarge upon at pleasure."

It was hot enough to bake potatoes in a man's hat when we arrived, at three o'clock in the afternoon, under the walls of Mar Saba. The monks had not room for so many people, and Canaan pitched our tent on a stony side-hill near the convent. No thermometer would have been tall enough to fully express the ardency of this extemporary oven. We melted out of it almost immediately, and ran down the slope into a sort of cave formed by a projecting ledge of rock. Canaan cooked a disgustingly hot dinner; and we sweatingly looked forward to the night. "Where are you

going to sleep, Doctor?" asked the Sagamore, taking off his hat to wipe the perspiration from his forehead.

"How you talk, Brother Soandso! I am going to lie under this rock. But I don't expect to sleep anywhere."

We did sleep, after a fashion—that is to say, approximatively; we came remarkably near it for several hours together. But we rose gladly at daybreak from our limestone bed, and hurried away, through the cool morning, to Jerusalem.

We witnessed the hocus-pocus of the Holy Fire, while a host of fanatics stamped and screamed in a kind of lunatic war-dance around the Sepulchre. One thing about the ceremony had an air of the miraculous; that was the rapidity with which the fire was diffused through every nook and cranny of the huge rambling edifice. From torch to torch it leaped like lightning; clomb the walls on cords let down from above, and darted like will-o'-the-wisps to the height of every dome and gallery. Everybody had a taper in his hand, passing fingers, beard, and face through its flames, and pretending to

purify his very garments by its sacred unconsuming heat. "It wo'nt burn ! it wo'nt burn !" shrieked an old Greek *papa* by my side, as he charitably offered his candle for the benefit of my soul, skin, and raiment. I tried to make him hold his fingers in the blaze, but the old fellow dodged them through dexterously, and, to my disappointment, got off without a scorch. If the church had a morsel of wood about it, the holy fire would have burnt it up ere this, and perhaps roasted its fanatical admirers into a suspicion that it came from some other place than Heaven.

In these frantic adorations, this was the doggerel *Kyrie Eleison* of the Arabs :

Haadha kubbur Seyyidna ;
Fadh en noor, wa iedna ;
Wat el messeah feddana,
Wa be dummoo ishterana.
Hal furruh furruhna ;
Wa el Yehood, yahazain !

And this, being translated, runs, as I was told, thus :

This is the grave of our Lord ;
Light overflows, and we keep the feast ;
Christ has died our Redeemer,
And by his blood has bought us.
This joy is our joy ;
And the Jews, O how miserable !

The Armenians sang :

Loosavoria Yeroosalem !
Zahasyada jemkoh.

That is :

Lighten up, O Jerusalem !
Thy time is come.

We were now ready to go. The Chaplain had left us some days before. The Sagamore and I sold our horses, or rather Canaan sold them for us, at a reasonable loss of some twenty per cent., which was quite as cheap as if we had hired the animals instead of buying them. We hired three hacks for the day, and set out for Jaffa. On our way down the stony mule-paths towards the coasts of the Philistines we overtook an old, and, at the same time, a very new fellow-traveler. By the roadside reposed a group of pilgrims, of whom one seemed to be a mother, and held in her arms an exceedingly juvenile specimen of orientalism. "Good morning," said the Sagamore in Turkish. "How came you to start on a pilgrimage with such a young child?"

"O Effendi!" replied one of the party, "this is the favored infant that was born in the Jordan."

It was a fine baby enough, as babies go ; and flourished, doubtless, all the better for having started in life with a bath of cold water. In fact, it is not every oriental picaninny who is born to such good luck. As a general thing, babies in the East, on making their appearance in the world, are immediately oiled and salted like anchovies. The object of the salt I never could divine, unless it is to make them keep sweet. They are subsequently rolled tightly in bandages, like mummies ; and not a drop of water touches their skins, if the mother can help it, for some time after, baptism being often the first ablution. I remember an observation of an American Syrian missionary, in connection with this subject. "My wife," said he, "is busy with some babies who have been unlucky enough to be born in this country. Washing new-born babies is a strange idea in some of those regions, and one that frightens the old-fashioned nurses considerably."

Speaking of babies puts me in mind of a remark which I heard in another Mission-station of the East. I was on a visit to the oldest missionary in the country ; a grave yet genial man,

whose jokes shone most comically in the setting of his solemn conversation and demeanor. During my stay, a young friend happened in, who had been favored a day or two before with a little image of himself. He was as full of complacency over the acquisition as a Biddy over her morning egg ; and, catching up the youngest boy of the family, he began to discourse ecstatically to him concerning the little responsibility. "Papa," said the urchin, slipping down and running to his father's knee, "Mr. Goodman says he has got a little baby." "Charley," replied papa, without relaxing a feature of his countenance, "tell Mr. Goodman that our old cat has got *four*." Everybody relished the joke, except the newly honored parent, who looked as if he thought that the remark bordered upon irreverence, if not profanity.

As we approached the coast, we thought that we observed an unusual number of tall men, which led us to wonder whether any of the blood of the Anakims exists in the present inhabitants of Philistia. We afterwards heard this observation made by other travelers concerning the inhabitants of this region. I did not stop

any of them to examine whether they were furnished with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, after the fashion of some Scriptural giants. I was only afraid that they might take a fancy to examine me, as for some time I was quite in the power of this long-legged population. That day saw us eleven weary hours in the saddle; and towards nightfall we parted company, and got on each as he best could. My beast was unable to travel fast, by reason of his having no flesh between his bones and his skin. I dismounted, and used various means of annoyance to force him into a trot or a fast walk; but it was not in his carcass to perform such a feat, and thus I at last found myself out of sight behind the rest of our party. I looked doubtfully at the swarthy Philistines who crossed and recrossed my track in the twilight, and hoped that they had got thoroughly over their idolatry and would not think of sacrificing me to Dagon or Moloch. I had no arms, not even the jaw-bone of an ass; and, if I had had such a thing about me, I was too tired to smite the hips and thighs of many giants, even in self-defense. But no hands were laid on me, either six-fingered or

otherwise, and I overtook my comrades in safety at the gates.

We stayed one night in verdurous, orange-groved Jaffa, receiving the kind attentions of the gentlemanly Armenian who has gratuitously represented our flag there for so many years. This really excellent man has been much persecuted by a certain English official who tried to levy a contribution upon him, and, having neither craft enough to circumvent him, nor force to crush him, takes the mean revenge of traducing him to American travelers, and believing him in American papers.

The next day we set sail for Beirut in a diminutive Turkish steamer. *Red-boots* performed the voyage with us, and still wore, if I remember right, his gorgeous leg-coverings. I saw my last of him on the landing-place of Beirut; but I can still imagine him enlarging on theology, letting nothing pass without a thorough examination, and exciting the cupidity of barbarous tribes by his dazzling display of scarlet leather. The Doctor left us, to our regrets, and sailed away in the track of the setting sun. The Sagamore followed soon after, and I

remained the sole rag and relic of our pilgrimage.

As for our original friend, the Yorkshireman, I must not let him off so quietly. I soon both met him and heard of him again, and learned something of his adventures previous and subsequent to our ocular acquaintance with him. Speaking no language but Yorkshire, ferocious against the swindling dragomen of the East, he traveled without a servant, and stuck like a burr to any well-attended English party which would tolerate his comradeship. He went up the Nile in a steamboat, and came down in the same, without taking any further pains to see Thebes or Luxor. Glad enough then was everybody to have him in company ; for the crazy machine got out of order, and offered an unexpected opening to his mechanical skill. Tearing off his coat, he went to work like an able-bodied, able-headed man, as he was, in his way, and soon restored the cranks and levers to a proper sense of their duties. In fact, he was no impertinent Paul Pry, like *Red-boots*, but simply a most useful individual, who had got strangely out of place.

Finding no companions from Cairo to Jerusalem, he started across the desert alone. He had a "dragoman," as he invariably called him—that is to say, the camel-driver, a Bedawee Arab, who spoke nothing but his own language. Blunderers and blunderbusses are something alike—they both often hit the mark by hitting everything within reach. Fortune probably thought it useless to give him lessons, and so allowed him to arrive without mishap under the walls of Suez. As it was past midnight, the gates were shut, and the governor and the garrison and the inhabitants were all in bed, not expecting company from Egypt at that hour of moonshine. Our tired and hungry friend consequently found himself an outsider, tentless, with the cheerful society of his Bedawee, his camel, and his Nubian club. "Me dragoman screamed and hallooed," said he, "and some fellows came to the top of the wall and jabbered at him like the devil; but they would not let us in. Then I tried to explain the matter—a few words, you know—but they wouldn't listen to reason; and finally they went away; and there we were. Well, me dragoman

wanted to go off and sleep on the sand, as we had done the night before. But I had got me temper up, you see, and I wouldn't sleep on the sand. So I slid down along the camel's tail, and walked up to the gates, and lifted me club. Will you let me in? says I. There wasn't a fellow answered. Then I battered away at the gates till you might have heard me clear across the desert. Will you let me in? says I again. But there wasn't so much as a mouse stirring, and I didn't know what to do, you know. So at last I dropped me club, and put me shoulder against the gates, and gave one! two! three! and a shove, you know, and I'll be hanged if I didn't burst 'em right in. Well, there I was, right in the middle, and the gates burst in. I didn't know but they might put me in prison, or skin me alive, you see. I didn't know what they might do to me. There were some fellows there looking at me; but not one of 'em touched me. And so I picked up me club, you know, and went behind the camel and gave him a poke; and says I, *imshe!* that means *go ahead*; that's the only word that I know in Arabic. So we marched in, and found

a nasty place to sleep in. And that's the way I took the city of Suez."

At Jerusalem our heavy friend tried to effect an entrance into the Mosque of Omar, that holiest of Islamite edifices, after the Caaba at Mecca. He disguised himself for this adventure, as he understood disguises; his ideas on that subject being about as complete and definite as those of an ostrich. He put on a *tarboosh*, and folded himself in an Arab cloak, leaving perfectly visible his blazing English face, the bottoms of his jean pantaloons and his most unoriental boots. He then made for the sacred precinct, marched boldly through the wide-open gate, and had half-crossed the square in front of the Mosque before the Moslems could stir for amazement. They gathered around, stopped him, got him down, pummeled him, pitched him out of the enclosure, and with difficulty dissuaded themselves from stoning him to death on the spot.

We heard something more of him from an Irish Protestant missionary in Damascus, who told us that he made the acquaintance of the hero of Suez at his morning Sabbath service.

Dressed in white linen, he was sitting at a few paces from the preacher, his green eyes intently fixed on a flea who was incautiously advancing to the attack over one broad knee of his pantaloons. Warily moving forward his right hand, he made a ponderous dash upon the assailant, and secured him triumphantly between his thumb and fore-finger. Then, holding him up calmly, but firmly, he fixed his eyes on the speaker, and listened with solemnity to the end of the sermon. The moment the benediction was pronounced, he advanced to a brazier of burning charcoal, and gravely dropped his prisoner into its ardent centre. In a conversation after service, he adverted to his late triumph, and then related a circumstance which had happened to him at Tiberias.

The fleas, it seems, relished him exceedingly, and were so voracious for dinners and lunches off his carcass, that they gave him small chance to sleep. Now Tiberias, after the valley of the Dead Sea, is the most insufferably hot place in all Syria, and supports a dense population of the most vigorous vermin. Like its famous and rascally founder, the Emperor Tiberias, it is

perfectly alive with things that crawl and nibble. In fact, the Arabs have a saying, that the king of the fleas lives at Tiberias. Accordingly, when our somniferous friend stretched himself at night in a Tiberian citizen's hut, anticipating a reasonable allowance of repose, he found that he had been counting without his host, or at least without his host of fleas. Not having rested much for two nights before, by reason of the same trouble, he was determined to persevere, and sleep, as he had got into Suez, by main strength.

“I stuck to it,” said he. “I was sleepy as an owl, and says I to myself: I *must* sleep; there’s no help for it; I *must* sleep. Well, I tried hard for more nor two hours, but it was no use; the flays wouldn’t let me. Well, I says to meself, I can’t stand this any longer. And so I takes me blanket and shakes it, and then I walks out and finds a smooth place on the beach of the lake. So I lays me down and composes meself to sleep. I was almost gone off, when I feels something crawling up the leg of me pantaloons. And says I to myself, surely it’s larger nor a flay. But I was too sleepy to

pay much attention to the creature, you know, and I remarked that it never bit me. Presently it crawls up as high as me knee ; and says I to meself, surely it's larger nor a flay. Presently it begins to crawl higher ; and so I rouses meself, and rolls up the leg of me trousers, and pulls the creature out. And being sleepy as an owl, you know, I tucks the thing into me coat pocket, and ties me handkerchief around the neck of me pocket to keep it from crawling out. Well, then I goes to sleep wonderfully, and snoozes away till morning. And when I waked up, I forgot all about the creature, you know, and didn't think of it till I mounted me horse. Then I felt something hard knock against me hand ; and I remembered that I had put something there that disturbed me slumbers. So I untied me handkerchief and took the creature out, and behold it was a crab !”

The last that I heard of the Yorkshireman, he was climbing the backbone ridge of Lebanon, attended by one Arab, who, like all the rest of his interpreters, spoke not a word of English. Since then, what cities he has stormed, what fleas he has roasted, what crabs he has

bagged, and what ingenious disguises he has put on, to get into forbidden kettles of hot water, I have never learned, and am grievously afraid that I never shall.

VII.

ACQUAINTANCE IN MOUNT LEBANON.

THE climate of Beirut is depressingly hot during the summer, and most of the well-to-do foreign residents, and many natives, take wing, in the month of June, for some cool nest on Mount Lebanon. The Hakeem invited me to count myself one of his nomadic family, and make a trial of life in the Syrian highlands. Various mules and horses were loaded with baggage and people, and dispatched in small caravans up the rough highways and byways of the mountain. The last party consisted of the Hakeem and his wife, myself, and an under-sized, four-year-old individual, whom a certain grave missionary used to designate, in his kindly way, as the "small lad."

A sort of little Saharah has been formed south of Beirut, by the sands of the sea; and this youthful desert, like its bigger brethren in vari-

ous parts of the world, is continually encroaching on the green earth around it. With a barren intolerance, like the zeal of atheists, it seems to consider grass a nuisance, flowers a deformity, and trees a desecration of the soil. Every year, like an insidious disease, it creeps stealthily nearer the city, and has already sheeted over many once verdurous places with its shifting, glittering sterility. As it lay in herbless, pulverous heaps among the enclosures of perished gardens, it seemed to me a glaring image of the unproductiveness and death which have crept over the once intellectual and vigorous Orient. A very small degree of energy, on the part of the Beirutees, would save their land from its fatal presence; inasmuch as a single hedge of the large native cactus will resist its advances for many years; fronting as firmly against its desultory hostility as Napoleon's old infantry against the wild cavalry of the Mamelukes. Of late, something has been done in this way; not by the people, but by the government. Various pashas in Syria have signalized their respective advents, by planting groves of pine across the track of the sandy crusade. These

trees flourish courageously under difficulties, arrest the evil, at least so far as their shadow extends, and in time restore the soil beneath them to some degree of fertility.

Notwithstanding the labors of these philanthropic pines, we had to walk our horses through abundant sand-rolls, before reaching the green valley of the Nahr-Beirut. To our right rustled the faded green foliage of an enormous olive grove; to our left steamed the hot little delta of the river, richly productive of mulberry-trees and fever and ague. A few moments carried us across the green level, and brought us to the base of the long ascent. Mount Lebanon roads seem to have been constructed by goats, for the use of goats; but Syrian horses, never having seen anything better, scramble up them with wonderful contentedness and agility. Mountaineers, from lofty dove-cotes of villages, met us continually on the way, often laden with produce for the city, yet skipping as lightly as birds down the steep rocky slopes. Women passed us, heavily burdened; not stooping under the weight, however, but stepping with a singular perpendicular

strut, which eventually becomes habitual at all times. Many were provided with help-meets in the shape of mules and donkeys, and put upon them the responsibility of backing the market merchandise down the difficult roads. Almost every one of these people gave us a pleasant smile as they met us, and, putting one hand to the breast, wished, " May God bless your morning!"

Under this hail of benedictions, we clambered one huge steep after another, stumbled into deep, fervent valleys, and rose on the opposite side to still more airy eminences. Beirut and its gardens draped themselves in the loveliness of distance ; the sea grew grand and glorious, and immeasurable beneath us ; white sails fluttered into sight on its horizon, and seemed to wave to us, as if in encouragement ; long vistas opened down terraced valleys, dark-green at the bottom, with lemon and orange-trees, and mingling afar with other chasms of verdure ; flat-roofed villages looked up at us in wonder from deep recesses, or down in contempt from dizzy elevations above ; and to the east rose the great uneven ridge of Lebanon, bare, brown, and

trackless, or crowned in its higher regions with a chaplet of glittering snow.

A shocking bad goat-track tumbled us into the rough, stony ravine, which, gaping immeasurably, almost encircled Bhamdun, the goal of our journey. The succeeding ascent was the steepest that we had yet encountered, and required remarkable spryness on the part of the horses, and great cohesive qualities in the riders, to enable both parties to reach the summit in company, or even at all. But my beast was an old mountaineer, and would have climbed anything short of a lightning-rod or a rope ladder. Every snort of his venerable nostrils seemed to say, "Now then! never say die! all together, four legs!" And with the Howaja sitting on his tail, the energetic quadruped surmounted the edge of the acclivity, and wagged his puffing nose through the narrow streets of the village. Low houses of roughly-hewn stone flanked us on either side, drawn up in disorderly ranks, like militia-men on parade, and, so to speak, squaring their elbows towards all points of the compass, after a very independent and squatter-like fashion. Women with toilworn

but good-humored faces smiled from the doors as we passed, and abundantly blessed our mornings. Little children, whose mothers had inveterate hydrophobia, scrambled out of the way of our horses, appearing wonderfully old and dignified in their thick head-dresses, their long robes and their slipshod shoes. At the other end of the village, where it fronted on its orchards of vines and mulberries, we pulled up at the door of the Hakeem's summer mansion. Yusef, the cook, and Jurjus, the man of all work, rushed out with smiling, hospitable faces to receive us. My horse was politely shown to his stall in the basement story; and I was conducted into the parlor directly above my respected quadruped's eating and sleeping apartment. Leaving him to transact his own affairs, I made a minute inspection of that part of the house which was intended for humanity. The centre of the building, was a hall about twelve feet wide and twenty-seven feet long. The floor at one end was raised some eight inches, forming a species of reception-room, which had been furnished with low divans. This recess was lighted by a double-arched window, which

looked out on a neighboring back-yard, vocal all day with the shrieks and howlings of some ill-used Arab babies. Half the front of the hall was perfectly open, simply fenced in by a wooden railing, and the rude pillars of three Saracenic arches, which supported that part of the roof. From thence you could look down into the valley below the village, and away over rocky hills to the distant gleam of the Mediterranean. Oh, what sunsets of gold used to sit on those waters, like famous empires on the horizons of the past, and slowly lose their splendor and vanish into the night! On various sides of the hall, opening into it, were posted, like outworks, the Hakeem's room, the room of the girls, my room, and the parlor. The latter, and the raised dais at the end of the hall, served, in case of need, as the dormitories of visitors.

The floor, all over the house, was of mud, tamped solid, and well-dried, but so uneven that no school-boy would have accepted it as giving fair-play to his marbles. I used to indulge in long reveries over its diminutive plains and valleys and highlands, looking down through

wreaths of tobacco smoke, from the elevation of my stature, as the gods look through clouds from Olympus, and imagining it peopled with some infinitesimal race, living and laboring and squabbling upon its circumscribed geography, in minute mockery of earth and her restless inhabitants. Once a week a dirty-trowsered village maiden washed the floor with a solution of red-clay, and then polished it with a smooth pebble, until it shone like a pair of new boots. Here and there mats were spread, to render the footing less damaging to the complexion of white skirts and yellow slippers.

As for the ceiling, it looked so ponderous, and, at the same time, so unstable, that it was at once a comfort and a terror. Logs, stripped of their bark, and otherwise in a state of nature, stretched from wall to wall, and formed the substratum. Crosswise upon these reposed short bits of narrow board; large flat stones lay like an aerial quarry over them; the whole was thatched, so to speak, with four or five inches of well-tamped earth and gravel. Notwithstanding that it was heavy enough to crush a village, our roof would not always keep out

the rain, which dripped cheerfully through in wet weather, and added little lakes and oceans to the scenery of the geographical floor. The corners, between the beams and cross-pieces, afforded excellent building-spots to the swallows, who accordingly squatted there, and used to sail comfortably in and out all day. These loquacious birds made a good deal of unnecessary racket, strongly reminding me, by their vociferous way of doing business, of the Arab boatman who had raised such a hubbub about our arrival in the country.

My room was the largest in the house. It had been designed, by the respectable founder of the edifice, for a grand dining-hall, fit for the Sultan or the Prince of Persia to over-eat themselves in. Across the end, by the door, stretched a stone pavement, separated from the rest of the apartment by a curious wooden fence. This, I suppose, was meant as a standing place for the servants, or the dogs, or the pots and kettles, or something else that was only wanted at intervals during the meals. Above it, there was a large round hole in the

wall, intended for the convenience of passing in dishes from the next room. How this orifice may have answered its prandial purpose I cannot say; but I found it a rather embarrassing addition to the capabilities of a bed-chamber. There was also a smaller hole in the door, for which I could imagine no earthly use, unless the former occupant had a kitten or a puppy, to whom he wished to grant free ingress and egress. I sometimes thought, indeed, that it might be a hopping-out place for the rats or fleas; but, as they could hop in there just as easily, this supposition did not seem to merit much respect. Finally, there was a door into the next room, with a crack so wide between it and the door-post, that Ichabod Crane, or any other thin person, might have slipped through comfortably, without in the least disturbing the shrivelled portal.

My dormitory had blind walls on three sides, but was sufficiently lighted, for sleeping purposes, by a window, which opened into the central hall. All the windows in the house had been furnished with glass, which was a

constant astonishment to the aborigines of the village, human and quadruped. One morning, an ignoramus of a cat got into my room, through one of the holes aforesaid, and, on my making some manual remonstrances against his stay, attempted to get out through the window. He plunged, unsuspectingly, at the clear pane, rolled back with a squeal on the floor, tried it again, with great emphasis, and fairly butted through, coming down on the outside amid an avalanche of broken glass. Looking somewhat stupefied by the shock, he sat his tail a-kimbo, and made off at half speed, no doubt very much surprised at the density of the atmosphere between my window-sashes.

On another occasion, I saw the schoolmaster of the village nonplussed by the same mystery. A Turkish Pasha had called to see the Hakeem, and was on reception in the parlor. His presence being noised abroad, the principal inhabitants of Bhamdun, and among them grammatical Abu Mekhiel, came to present their respects to his excellency. The Turk, a stout good-humored personage, sat on one of the divans, and the magnates of the hamlet crossed

their legs comfortably on the floor. The dignitary spoke very little Arabic, the mountaineers spoke not a word of Turkish, but both sides smoked cheerfully, and time passed away like a pinch of snuff. Suddenly an accidental knock of the Pasha's elbow sent the coal from his pipe on to the rush matting which partly covered the floor. Abu Mekhiel eagerly seized the inflamed morsel, and tried to throw it out of the window. As it was shut, he rapped his knuckles smartly, burnt his fingers, dropped the coal, and called for the tongs. It was an immense incident in the monotony of the visit; and even the stout Pasha laughed and chuckled at the blunder of abashed Abu Mekhiel.

In describing our house, I must not forget the rats, which were, perhaps, its most numerous inhabitants. They seemed to think that it belonged to their order, and fairly haunted it, especially by night. They rattled and rolled through invisible galleries, like diminutive four-legged peals of thunder. The Hakeem had famous sport among these creatures, and blazed away at their shiny eyes and bald tails, until we thought he would eventually get rid of them

by burning the house up. They were a perpetual bugbear to the small lad, who was afraid to sleep alone, lest they should climb up the bed coverlet and nibble at his toes.

I have adverted to the union of stable and house in one edifice. This architectural approximation of the human and animal kingdom, was the cause of various uncouth interruptions and interludes in our drawing-room conversations. A speaker would be diverted from the train of his ideas by an outrageous scream, or a tattoo of kicks from some excited beasts below. Whenever a strange horse was introduced into these subterranean quarters, there was almost sure to be a clamorous disagreement. Whether they wanted to eat off each other's tails; whether they tried to annex each other's portion of barley; or whether they differed on some other question of an abstract nature; at all events, they were never able to come to an understanding without an unreasonable uproar.

Visitors kept perpetually dropping in, and we almost always had some puffy-trowsered individual cuddled upon the divan, or against the wall, his pipe sending a wreathing fragrance

aloft among the rats and swallows. As long as I staid in Bhamdun, probably never a day passed without a dozen or twenty of these turbaned exits and entrances. Occasionally, my alien and inquisitive ears would be delighted by an observation of the most innocent simplicity. One day the old Maronite priest of the village lounged into the hall, and smoked his pipe in a comfortable taciturnity for half an hour. Noticing the swallows at last, he remarked that a blessing lay upon the house, since it was inhabited by those good-omened birds.

“Why so?” asked the Hakeem.

“Do you not see that those swallows are constantly bringing earth in their bills to mortice their nests?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know from where they bring that earth?”

“No.”

“They bring it from the tomb of Moses. Every morsel of that blessed earth comes from the tomb of Moses.”

“Indeed! But I thought that no man knew where Moses was buried.”

“Very true. But the swallows know.”

“But how do people feel so sure, then, that the swallows get it from the tomb of Moses?”

“Well,” said the old man, taking a puzzled pull at his pipe, “God knows. I never thought of that before.”

One of the most frequent visitors at the Hakeem’s house was a man named Khalil, Maronite born, but now, thanks to the American missionaries, a Protestant. Although only about forty or forty-five years old, our girls called him Uncle Khalil, according to the custom of Syrian young folks when speaking familiarly to one who has attained the ripeness of middle life. Of a slender frame, slow and easy motions, a face decidedly more northern than southern in its features, Khalil always entered with the heartiest and kindest smile. He wore a dark blue jacket, full dark trowsers, a large white turban, and forever carried a short pipe, sometimes gravely smoking it, sometimes using it gesticulatively to point a moral or adorn a tale. He was a good representative of a large class, half farmer, half trader, to be found scattered all over the mountain. He was a moderate

landed proprietor, holding mulberry orchards and grain land on different parts of the terraced hillsides of Lebanon, a bit here and a bit there, according to the fashion of the mountaineers, who never own a farm all lying together.

The time and capital not devoted to his own agriculture, he gave to traffic in the produce of other people. In the spring he usually bought a flock of sheep of the Kurdish shepherds, who come annually with their broad-tailed stock from the elevated plains about Erzeroum. Over and above his woolly quadrupeds, the Kurd always threw in his huge sheepskin coat, and his fierce sheep dog. Khalil then placed his flock under the care of some hireling shepherd, and set out on a retailing tour among the villages, selling to each family a sheep. Some sales were for cash, but more were for cocoons, to be taken at a stipulated price when the silk season should arrive in the succeeding July. If credit was thus given, the buyer paid Syrian interest, which varies from fifteen to thirty or forty per cent., by the year. Khalil had a large market to choose from, for a great proportion of the terraced declivities of Mount Lebanon, as well

as the shore plain at its base, is devoted to the cultivation of the mulberry. The silk of Bhamdun alone will average nearly a ton, after it is wound from the cocoons. The women, who exclusively take care of the worms, become very fond of them, caress them, kiss them, and call them endearing names. After gathering his cocoons, our friend Khalil wound off the imperfect ones, on the coarse Arab reel, and sold the better sort to the French or English merchants, who have established flourishing filatures in various parts of Syria. These men paid him in cash, which he invested in coarse raw silk, to be retailed to native weavers.

His next step was usually to go to the fine wheat lands of the Bukaa, and speculate in cereals. The mountains alone, in Syria, are free-hold. The great plains are the private property of the Sultan, who exacts about a quarter of the crops from the cultivators, as tax and ground rent. This is paid in kind, or compromised for a specific sum in cash, at the time of harvest. The peasantry were glad of the intervention of so reputable a middle-man as our enterprising Bhamdunee; and the oppressive government

official was equally pleased to escape from the hard duty of overlooking an unscrupulous tenantry. Khalil compromised for the cash, and became owner of the Sultan's quarter of the crops. Night and day he watched the enormous grain heaps of the threshing-floor ; and at the end of the season received one measure of wheat or barley for every three retained by the villagers. He sold on the spot enough to pay the Sultan's dues, and carried home the remainder, which generally amounted to about one-eighth of the crop. He thus made a profit equal to his entire risk, without having laid out a piastre, at the same time that he conferred an actual favor on both the peasants and their imperial landlord.

This was his favorite operation. He tried to persuade me into a partnership, in order to secure the protection of the stars and stripes against the petty exactions of government understrappers. I felt tempted now and then to accede, and formed various miragic fancies of setting up for a Syrian farmer-general. Three or four thousand dollars would have been a stupendous capital, and would have made me a little despot among the grain-raising, cocoon-

selling peasantry of plain and mountain. With the income derivable from that sum, I could have had a town house, a mountain house, a wife from some genteel Arab family, like the Bait Susa, a couple of blood horses, and three or four servants. I should have passed only so much time as I pleased in riding about the country with Khalil; and for the rest, should have kept myself comfortably quiet with hot coffee, amber-mouthed chibouks, and silver-mounted nargilehs. I should have set up a big turban immediately, and a long beard as soon as I was able. I should have become a great Arabic scholar, and read the Arabian Nights in the original. I should have had bad debtors and dragooned them into honesty with swarms of gormandizing Howaleyeh. Not seldom since those days has the lazy sunshine of that idea lured my mind back to Syria. I sometimes feel as if it would be delightful to retire into a turban, shadow myself with tobacco smoke, and let the age drive by.

With the hope of drawing better crops from the deep soil of the plains, Khalil sent for one of the lighter sort of American

plows. The Bhamdunees laughed heartily at the outlandish enormity, and unanimously voted that such a thing would never work. "God knows," said Khalil, "it turns earth very well in America, and I suppose will do the same thing here." "Every land has its peculiarities," replied the unbelievers; "this will not suit our atmosphere." But this really intelligent and enterprising Arab has never yet dared to use his foreign plow, for fear that so costly and novel an instrument should be made an apology for fresh exactions.

By the time that Khalil had closed his speculation on the threshing-floors of the Bukaa, the vintage of the mountain was at hand. Bhamdun has about one thousand acres of vineyard, descending from the lofty hill, back of the village, over hundreds of terraces, to the bottom of the enormous ravine in front. The grapes are both purple and white, usually the latter; the earlier varieties small, and of a soft pulp; the later ones firm, delicious, and of some kinds remarkably large. The people eat them in great quantities fresh, and dry them into raisins for winter use. There are grape-

presses where the juice is crushed out with the naked feet, to be boiled into *dibs*, a very pleasant kind of thick molasses. It is this *dibs* which is sometimes brought to our temperate shores as "communion wine," "the pure juice of the grape." The pure juice of the grape it certainly is, exactly as treacle is the pure juice of the sugar-cane. It is wine, therefore, just as true as molasses is rum. Khalil exchanged some of his wheat and barley for the vintage of his Druse neighbors, and then retired into winter quarters, to retail at leisure his various stock of raw silk, grain, *dibs*, and raisins.

Such is the business life of a merchant of produce in Mount Lebanon. In the small career which is permitted to them, the Syrians show a good degree of mercantile shrewdness and enterprise. Perhaps the locality inspires them, or there are some echoes in the blood, as Calderon phrases it, which come down to them from their ancestors. All along their coast lived the old Phenicians, who were very glorious merchant princes when England was solely remarkable for its tin mines and the painted hides of its citizens. One of the most unfor-

tunate blanks in ancient history is our total ignorance of the political economy of the Tyrians, Sidonians, and their colonies. What were their tariffs, their navigation laws, their profits and cargoes, the pay and character of their seamen? They gave letters to the Greeks: who were their Roscoes and Lorenzos de Medici? They coasted England and circumnavigated Africa: where are the biographies of their Columbus and Captain Cook? But their glory has sunk almost as deep into our ignorance as their gorgeous galleys ever foundered beneath Indian or Atlantic billows.

Modern Syrian enterprise sails as far, but in foreign bottoms. There are now some considerable mercantile houses in Beirut. A small, direct trade over American keels has been opened with New York and Boston. Before many years the Directory of our great commercial capital will become still more thorny than now, to our organs of speech, with unpronounceable names from the land of the east and the clime of the sun.

Of the mechanical skill of the Syrians little can be said, although they furnish some pretty

specimens of silken stuffs. The manufacture of steel has died out in Damascus, whose present inhabitants are unequal to the composition of a good common hatchet. As the beautiful palaces of that city fall into dilapidation, they are restored by botchwork, distinguishable at first sight from the dim glory of the olden walls and arches. The implements of trade are probably exact copies of the expired patents of Tubal Cain ; and agriculture is about as it was in the suburbs of Eden just after the expulsion of its incautious gardener.

VIII.

SYRIAN MANNERS AND CONVERSATION.

THE Syrians seemed to me an eminently social people, inquisitive, gay, good-natured, and, on the whole, amiable. Their faults are a large spice of envy, a plentiful peppering of lies, vanity, lack of moral courage, and a particular susceptibility to ridicule. They enjoy a long, late sitting with a party of friends, when the time is spent in coffee, conversation, and a reciprocity of nargilehs, compliments, and stories. They abound in graceful gestures, are quick in repartee, delight in argument, and have a ready flow of talk. Their subjects of conversation are the crops, money-making, sectarian quarrels, politics, literature, and scandal. They make large use of innumerable current proverbs and quotations from favorite old poets. The women among our visitors always began with a salutatory exordium of compliments,

followed up fast with gossip and household matters, and closed with another shower of compliments, like the shaking of a fruitful apple-tree. Abu Mekhiel talked literature occasionally, and used to get into fragrant brown studies over his pipe and the Arabic books in the Hakeem's library. In general, the men were remarkably courteous and self-possessed in their manners, and, not seldom, polished, and even elegant. They are singularly forbearing towards a foreigner's mistakes in their language, and they greeted some initiatory steps of mine in it with extremely undeserved applause. The very women and children, though of course less accustomed to strangers, showed this same civility, this same command over their features. The boys in the mission schools would sit, without a smile on their small faces, listening to some new-fledged missionary, who, for the first time, perhaps, was lifting up his bill, and trying to chirrup in Arabic. He might commit blunders enough to make a comedy, he might talk a lingo which no human being understood but himself, without extracting a grin from their infantine gravity and self-possession.

This singular forbearance is not extended alone to verbal misfortunes. I remember once making a spectacle of myself in a bodily way, without exciting the most modest merriment among the oriental bystanders. I had spent the night in one of the loftiest and least visited hamlets of the mountain, and was about to scale the back of my mule in presence of a crowd of curious villagers. Now a Syrian saddle is a broad, flat affair, extending, like an unstable table-land, from the animal's shoulders to his tail, utterly destitute of pommel, or any similar contrivance, to aid a mounter or steady a rider. Resolved to give the natives an exaggerated idea of American agility, I made a grand jump, with the intention of seating myself without the help of the stirrups. But I jumped a fraction too far, and overshot the mark, coming down on the other side, like a diver, with my hands and nose in the dust, and my feet in the saddle. The mule stood perfectly still, not caring a shake of his ears for my evolutions; and there I remained a moment, while my coat-skirts rolled over my head, as if to veil me mercifully from the ridicule of mankind. There

was a general grunt of sympathy from the spectators; they rushed forward, and helped me back to my natural uprightness, with as much tenderness as if I had been the sole offspring of every one of them. Not a smirk could I discover in all those faces, ranging from first to second childhood; and only when I set the example of laughing, did they reply by a temperate, well-bred smile; nor did even that seem to arise from anything more than a polite sympathy with my amusement. Now, if the Slicks, and the Downings, and their neighbors, should see a Turk take a flying leap over his quadruped, and get stuck, upside down, with his proboscis in a rut and his feet in the saddle, it is my impression that the Slicks, and the Downings, and their neighbors, would smile rather intemperately on the occasion.

This instinct of courtesy, together with a poetic love of figures and hyperbole, has produced a language of conversation absolutely ponderous with salutations and compliments. I asked my linguistic friend, the Hakeem, to give me a sample of Syrian talk, and he obliged me with the following dialogue, translated from

the honeyed lips of some children of the East. The parties are supposed to be acquaintances, meeting by hazard, and exchanging the ordinary chit-chat of the country. They are called Zeid and Omr, citizens most probably of Beirut. They put their right hands to their breasts, and take their pipes from their lips as they speak.

Zeid. May God bless your morning.

Omr. May he bless yours also.

Zeid. What is your condition to-day ?

Omr. God give you peace. How are you ?

Zeid. God prolong your life. I am well, by your favor.

Omr. By the favor of God.

Zeid. Are the cherished sons well ?

Omr. They kiss your hands. Your sons are well ?

Zeid. They inquire for your pleasure.

Omr. What news to-day ?

Zeid. You are better informed. You must have heard something.

Omr. God knows. News has reached me that the Queen of England sends her fleet to take possession of our country and drive out

the Turks. The vessels are not yet arrived, but the Pasha is in great fear.

Zeid. What has God wrought!

Omr. He is all-powerful.

Zeid. Do you go to the city to-day?

Omr. If God wills [i. e., perhaps]. When do you go?

Zeid. When God wills [i. e., it is uncertain].

[Enter a Mountaineer.]

Mountaineer. Healths! I hope you are all satiated.

Zeid. God satisfy you with mercy.

[Enter *Yusef*, surnamed *Abu Fares*.]

Zeid. Praise to God for your safety.

Yusef. I give thanks for your ascription of praise on my account.

Zeid. You have prolonged your absence. We have longed for you.

Yusef. May mercy never forsake you. I have had excessive desire to see you, and intended to come sooner.

Zeid. I hope the hindrance was prosperity.

Yusef. God increase your prosperity. There has been sickness in my house.

Omr. Has the mother of Fares been ill?

Yusef. No. It is my daughter (saving your presence). I must go for the Hakeem, and, as I am a stranger at his house, I rely upon your intercession with him. I beg you to do me the favor, when you have finished your business. I have found the sight of you pleasant. I bid you farewell.

Zeid. Go in the keeping of God. May he preserve us during your lifetime. Go in peace.

It is now supposed that Zeid and Omr finish their private conversation, and march after Yusef to back his petition for medical aid. The three enter the Hakeem's door, without knock or other signal, leave their shoes at the threshold, and walk with bare feet over the coarse reed matting. The Hakeem is sitting on a divan at the further end of the hall, discussing with Abu Mekhiel the mysteries of Arabic grammar. The three worthies approach, and, putting their hands to their bosoms, salute him with a trio of blessings on his morning. "Welcome! welcome!" he replies. "May God also prosper your morning." They sit down at his invitation, and then comes the inevitable coffee

and tobacco, and the equally inevitable thrusting and parrying of compliments. After a while, suspecting that some one is ill, and wishing to finish the conversation, the Hakeem urges vehemently his inquiries about health. One of the parties then comes to the point after the following fashion.

Zeid. Howaja Yusef has a favor to ask. He was diffident about it, but we assured him that your excellency delighted in doing good to all.

Omr. His child, a girl (saving your presence), is ill; and he, poor man! has tried many doctors; but our people know nothing, and he wishes now to leave those ignoramuses and apply to a son of a school.

Yusef. Your excellency's celebrity as a lover of all, a doer of good, and as a successful doctor, would have induced me to come to you at first; but I was ashamed, and so employed children of the Arabs; but how can a son of an Arab know anything! So finding my child growing worse, I ventured to trouble my friends, Haji Omr and Howaja Zeid, to intercede with you for me.

Hakeem. I am doubtful whether the time permits me to go.

Omr. Oh, consider it just a walk for pleasure, and so call in, and gain mercy by a good work.

Hakeem. I have no road that way just now.

Zeid. Howaja Yusef would not have ventured to annoy you, but he knew that you, like Jesus, went about doing good.

Yusef. I hope that you will consent, in honor of the Lord, and of my two interceding friends.

Zeid. (*In an audible aside.*) There is nobody like these Franks. There is even no other one of them like him. A gentle nature! Yes, and education has results! All his patients recover. Yes, God blesses his hands in all that they do; and may God reward him!

Yusef. I kiss your shoes. I pray you. I have no one but God and you. I came a day's journey, seeking God and you.

Omr. Howaja Yusef, do not press him too much. These Frank gentlemen always do good, and need no urging. He will see your child, and God will heal her by his hands.

The Hakeem surrenders. Yusef tries to kiss his miraculous fingers. Zeid and Omr thank him for accepting their intercession.

“And now,” says the Hakeem to me, “let us have a few commentaries. Abu Fares means Father of Fares; the individual named Fares being his oldest son. When Abu Fares is questioned concerning the causes of his prolix absence from the longing eyes of Zeid and Omr, he replies, indefinitely, that there has been sickness in the house. This means that a wife or daughter was sick. If it had been a son, he would have mentioned the name. It is not considered genteel in Syria to obtrude the existence of your female relations on the notice of masculine friends. There is a phrase, which I have twice translated, *saving your presence*. It means literally, *may you be elevated above it*. It is about the same as if a man should say: I beg your pardon for mentioning such a thing. These civil folk use it in speaking of any mean objects, such as asses, hogs, Jews, and women. It is in this courteous spirit toward the lords of humanity that Abu Fares observes: My daughter (*saving your presence*) is sick. But

this phrase is now confined to the mountains and interior. A friend of mine, in Syria, passed a pretty fair joke on one of our intelligent Arab acquaintance. 'Abu Habeeb,' said he, 'it is reported that the Queen of England (saving your presence) intends to visit the King of France.' "

"And how did Abu Habeeb take the observation? As a matter of course?"

"No; he saw the joke:—rather nettled by it than flattered. As for another phrase, *in sha allah*, which I have translated, *if God please*, it is an expression of wide meaning, a sort of omnibus of ideas, but generally implies doubt. They use it where we would say, *perhaps so*, or *I hope so*. I remember a grammar, compiled by some Arab scholar, in which it is introduced in a very curious way. Speaking of a certain verb, of which the first and second voices are regular and the third irregular, the grammarian observes: 'The first form of this verb is conjugated thus (giving the terminations); and the second form is conjugated thus; and the third form is conjugated *as God pleases*.' That is, it has no rule."

In reference to the disinclination of the Arabs to speak of women, I will mention, before passing to other subjects, the visit of a young Druse Sheikh to the Hakeem, for the purpose of obtaining advice and medicine for some invalid member of his own family. He began stating the case in the formal, indefinite style of a man who wishes to relate an affair without hitting on some unpleasant circumstance in it. "There is one among us," said he, "who is sick; and he has a pain in his side, and spasms in his left arm; he has now been ill for two or three weeks; but these symptoms which I mention have only occurred within a few days."

Hakeem. Is the person you speak of old or young?

Sheikh. (*With grave politeness.*) The person of whom I speak (and may you be exalted above her) is a woman, and is young.

Like talkative people in general the Arabs are good linguists, easily committing alien tongues to memory, and conquering the difficulties of their pronunciation. I imagine that one cause of this vernacular facility is the

embarrassing nature of their own language, which is multitudinous in words, and has a particularly large and unpronounceable alphabet. Having once mastered this, they are up to anything of the sort, like the Poles, Russians, and Hungarians, who all learn foreign languages well by reason of having first performed the incredible feat of learning Polish, Russian, or Magyar. There are two English sounds, however, which perplex the Arabs ; and they are not by any means those which I should have fixed on as peculiarly difficult. I was called upon one morning by a young Beyru tee who had acquired a little English, and was anxious to put it out at interest on every possible occasion. Speaking of the plague, he told me that, whenever it prevailed in the city, people were careful not to touch any one in the street, and kept each other at a distance with sticks and with their *bibes*.

“ Their *bibes* ? What are those ? ” said I, thinking that it might be some form of the disease.

“ Why, you know ;—their *bibes*,” he repeated, making a great effort of pronunciation.

“Yes, but I don’t understand ; we have no such word in English.”

“O, yes you have. I mean their bibes to smoke with.”

“Ah, I comprehend. Yes ; they poke one another off with their pipes, do they ?”

“Yes, oh yes ; they boke one another off with their bibes.”

It was the *P* that boggled him ; he had not yet learned to mind his *Ps*, whatever he did with his *Qs*. The syllable *ing* is another terrible enemy to a Syrian ; and if he talks of pudding he is sure to make pudden of it, like a countryfied New-Englander.

I noticed that the men in Syria often sported, in conversation, not only the inevitable pipe, but a string of large beads like a rosary. I thought at first that everybody was saying his prayers, or getting ready to say them on a moment’s notice. But the only object of the trinket was to fill up the chinks in the conversation, and relieve the embarrassed idleness of unoccupied fingers. In fact, the people tumbled and manipulated their beads just in the same way that a Yankee whittles, or puts

his hands in his pockets. The moment a conversation commenced, out would come the beads, and be counted, and slid, and rattled, and tied up, and untied, until the parting words were said and over. If a man lost his string of beads, he seemed to lose the thread of his ideas. I have seen, exactly in this predicament, a very wrathful sub-official of the Sultan, who had been grievously disturbed in the execution of his duties by a cunning mountaineer. He was one of the Howaleyeh, or irregular cavalry of Syria, a trooper in war, and a policeman in peace. The scene of fortune's disagreement with him was a small village in Lebanon, to the northeast of Beirut. The Hakeem and I were sitting on a bank, near a number of Arabs engaged in low, earnest conversation. It seems that an inhabitant of the village had got scandalously into debt to somebody, and that the creditor, as usual in hopeless cases, had applied to the government to collect his money. The Syrian way of punishing a debtor, rough as it is, is far preferable to our old contemptible idea of sending a man to prison, where he cannot work even to support his family. The pasha

dragoons the defaulter into honesty by quartering upon him one or two, or more, sometimes twenty, of the Howaleyeh. These cavaliers ride up to the door, and give themselves the trouble of dismounting and walking in; after which they are delicately tended and fed until the money is forthcoming. They must have lodgings; they must have breakfast, and dinner, and lunch; they would die without their pipes and coffee; their beasts must be cared for as themselves; in the words of Harold Skimpole, all they want is to live; but that is a good deal out of the pocket of the behind-handed proprietor. They are a pest to the women, who are obliged to keep themselves always veiled in their presence, no matter what urgent or delicate business is on hand, no matter if the household fat is in the fire ever so extensively. But all this time the annoyed debtor is free; he can work, and he usually does so with a will. In fact, the system is an effective one, and I respectfully recommend it to the consideration of our legislators.

But, in the case mentioned, the defaulter was a wily, desperate fellow, one of the worst

characters in the mountain, with the stains of blood, as well as the corrosion of gold, on his tattered conscience. Hearing that two horsemen were to be quartered on him, he broke up house-keeping with marvelous celerity, dispersed his family and effects among his neighbors, locked the door of his empty dwelling, and vanished into some unknown refuge. The Howaleyeh came just in time to wish that they had come before. As these errant righters of wrongs, and guardians of Syrian peace, usually have short purses, or none at all, our friends found themselves in a deplorable situation. No bed, no dinner, no coffee, nobody's pipes but their own, and nobody's barley for their horses. The group before us consisted of one of these gentlemen and two or three villagers, who were feeding the hungry individual with consolatory morsels of sympathy and advice. He was a man of about forty, short, dark, and grave, with a look of vicious cunning peeping out like a spider from his web of already deep wrinkles. At this moment the other Howaleh dashed up, and flung himself furiously out of his saddle. Somewhat younger than his com-

rade, he wore a bolder, more reckless air on his swarthy, aquiline features. He had apparently been on some scouting expedition, and evidently returned unsuccessful. He was bubbling over with passion, and stammered hopelessly on the threshold of his story. He began again; broke up, as the horse-characters phrase it; clutched eagerly and uselessly at his own girdle, and at last snatched the string of beads out of his companion's fingers. Now the words came; now his tongue was loosened; the beads rattled, and slid, and twirled; the story spun furiously out, like a deep sea-line; the clamorous peroration came in at full speed; the parts of speech were fairly in a huddle,lapping each other, neck and neck; the narration was over, and the beads, having performed their duty, were handed back to the owner.

It used to seem to me that nothing was ever so voluminous and windy as Arab conversation, unless it was Arab breeches. On the afternoon of a washing day, the blue cotton nether garments of Yusef and Jurjus swung, in awkward bagginess, on the drying-lines in the court-yard, disrespectfully tumbled by the waggish moun-

tain breezes, which flapped them like sails, and blew them up like balloons, or dashed them, with sudden pettishness, into some gaping angle of the surrounding fence. Diedrich Knickerbocker's idea, of covering Manhattan Island with one man's unmentionables, looked possible as you contemplated their puffy expanses. Yet they were nothing in surfaces, compared with the trowsers of a true Syrian dandy. A dressy Maronite Emir of Mount Lebanon actually came to his death by the bigness of his small clothes. He wore trowsers of that magnificence, that they took up a piece of cloth a yard in breadth by nine yards in length. In the war of 1840, he was engaged in a battle against the Druses, in which he and his men took to their heels immediately on getting sight of the enemy. He had, of course, a magnificent start, but he was so encumbered by his breeches, that the Druses caught him before he had waddled half a mile. Little quarter is shown in Mount Lebanon wars, and the unlucky dandy was massacred in his fatal trowsers ; thus affording another awful warning to the infatuated votaries of fashion.

The Arabs despise our trousers as much as we can possibly despise theirs. They consider them embarrassing, from their tightness; ugly, and, above all, indecent. I have heard this last epithet applied to my own modest pants, as well as to those of the Sagamore, and worse still, of our esteemed Doctor, and the well seeming Chaplain of our most Christian Majesty's frigate. O, disreputable representative of the apostolic succession! what a whitened sepulchre wert thou, to outrage Arab moralities by wearing inexpressibles less than nine yards wide!

The same fellow who is responsible for the above charge against our peculiar nether institution, also indulged in some unpleasant insinuations concerning the state of my hair. Observing my somewhat lengthy locks, as I stood, hatless, in the shade of a tree, he turned to a comrade and remarked: "In the name of God, what a mess that fellow's head must be in!" His own hair was shaved clean under his turban; and, no doubt, it crawled and bit him insufferably, even then. Shaving the head is almost universal, as far as Syrian *caputs* are

concerned, and is a very curious and comical operation to behold. Lounging in the hall one day, I heard a mysterious scraping and rasping at the foot of the stairs, in the court-yard. I looked over the railing, and saw Jurjus, the Jack of all work, now very hard at work indeed, in holding his head on, while another man shaved it with a dull razor. The barber had the devoted cranium in a tight place between his knees, and scraped at it as energetically as a Yankee farmer, with the edge of his steel candlestick, at the pellicle of a slaughtered pig. Jurjus was all in a perspiration, and grinned hideously, of course out of the wrong corner of his mouth. I thought of the delight with which one of our Indians would have accepted the job, and how rapidly he would have relieved Jurjus of his hair, and of all apprehensions of having any in future, without, perhaps, giving him a great deal more pain than he suffered by the present half-way operation. Fashions change, however, even in old Phenicia, and young Syria wears long hair.

But more than narrow pants, more than prolix capillaries, do the Syrians, at least the

Moslems, hate and despise a hat. Not so much a wide-awake, with its flexible texture and its shadowy flaps, as the beaver, the dress hat, the hat of polite society. Its awkward profile, its unyielding fabric, its sombre, monotonous complexion, its useless enormity in the crown, and its narrow, niggardly affectation of a brim, are, in their eyes, the ultimatum of ugliness and unreason. I believe it was partly contempt for this ungraceful head-piece, which led some Dick Turpins of the desert to play the following satirical practical joke on a couple of Frank travelers. The said nefarious nomads managed to capture a Frenchman and an Englishman, who were carrying out the *entente cordiale*, by luxuriating together among the ruins and fleas of Bukaa. They spared their lives, but they took everything else that belonged to them ; horses, money, coats, shirts, boots, even to the indecency of their pantaloons : in fact, they handed the abashed tourists back to the bosom of nature, without so much as a dicky or a pair of spurs. Blushing, to the tips of their toes, the poor gentlemen begged piteously for at least a tatter of their late gar-

ments. What did the roguish Arabs concede? They gave the Englishman his hat, and the Frenchman his spectacles. Not an article besides; not even a string whereby to suspend a fig-leaf. And, in this ludicrous caricature of our primitive innocence, the *entente cordiale* had to travel until it could beg or borrow some of the tags and bobtails of civilization.

But there is one article of fashionable costume in Mount Lebanon, more useless, and very near as ugly, as a beaver. On her bridal night, a girl of the mountain is cumbrously harnessed with something that, for want of a better name, may be called a horn. To take a horn on such an occasion is no very great novelty, to be sure; but the oddity of it here consists in its being put upon instead of into the head. It is a monstrous tube, about sixteen inches in length, rudely chased and fretted, usually of silver, but sometimes of brass, or even dried dough, and sometimes, too, of gold, set with rubies. It is fastened to the upper part of the forehead by means of a small cushion, and a number of silk cords which pass under the chin and interlace with the hair. It

projects forward at an angle of about sixty degrees, and its fatiguing weight is balanced by three or four huge tassels of silk and silver, which pendulate behind. A veil is thrown over its pinnacle, and hangs there, to use a comparison of the Slick family, like a shirt on a bean-pole. Wherever she goes, whatever she does, the matron of Mount Lebanon must wear her horn. She visits in it, works in it, and, worst of all, sleeps in it. This last circumstance is terrifying, and leads me to hope that my own countrywomen will never adopt the fashion. What an unpleasant circumstance to be bruised and gored in one's slumbers by the antler of a restless wife! How a man would be surprised, to wake up for the first time with the end of one of these ponderous cones in his eye! It is a wonder to me that any Syrian babies survive sleeping with their mothers. Perhaps, indeed, this is the reason why Arab infancy is so cautiously swathed and guarded by a seven-fold armor of bandages. In point of fact, the men often grumble, and seek to divest their spouses of such a costly and annoying decoration. The war of 1840 helped

them wonderfully to this end, although in a way that was very disturbing to their nerves and purses. As the Druses whipped the Maronites in almost every battle, they had large opportunities for plundering the Maronite districts, which they improved with great zeal and faithfulness. And wherever they met a married woman, they insisted upon having her horn as a souvenir of the interview. In short, horns became such uncertain property, that most people put them into concealment, and only enjoyed them in private, as topers enjoy theirs under the pressure of the Maine Law. A sort of interregnum thus ensued, and continued so long that the traditional influence of the custom became sadly dilapidated. At the end of the war, horns went up again, like stocks, but diminished in number, and much weakened in popularity.

Two kinds of them may be noticed in the mountain; in agricultural parlance, there are long horns and short horns. The first species, which I have just described, is to be found in the districts back of Beirut. Another, reminding one, by its shape, of an enormous thimble,

and worn on the apex of the head, but without any balance weight of tasseling, is peculiar to the still loftier villages behind Tripoli, around Ehden and the locality of the cedars. In a lower part of the mountain, called the Kesarawan, exists a variety of the short horn, modeled something like an unequal hour-glass, bound firmly to the right temple, and projecting laterally from the head.

I remember, with some admiration, the face of a handsome mountaineeress, who carried on perpetual war with her spouse, about this matronly appendage. She insisted upon wearing it; he held as obstinately to the contrary policy. When the husband was out, the horn went on in triumph; when the husband got home, the horn came off in an ignominious hurry. And so matters continued, the horn exalted and abased by turns, up to the date of my departure.

This little piece of scandal brings me to oriental family matters in general. The authority of Syrian husbands is despotic in appearance, and sometimes so in reality. It depends, however, as in other countries, very

much on the respective characters of husband and wife. The Syrian houri is often a tremendous scold, capable of making an astonishing verbal disturbance in defense of what she considers woman's rights, and if this fails, she often carries her point by diplomacy, or perseverance in downright teasing. But, in general, education and public opinion, not to mention physical strength, give an overpowering advantage to the man. The girls are usually married very young, and, therefore, come under the yoke without much resistance. But from the want of intellectual and moral instruction, they always remain children, just as a slave always remains a "boy." Like children, they are pettish and unreasonable, and, like them, they are governed, to a considerable degree, by manual suasion. Whipping wives is no uncommon performance in Syria; and, in point of fact, the women are very apt to deserve it. Spare the rod and spoil the wife. Men, sometimes, as well as the women, are engaged, and even marry very young. They are occasionally betrothed in mere childhood, and, at sixteen or seventeen, walk the plank of matrimony.

As the Hakeem and I were riding one day in Bukaa, we met one of the magnates of our village, who had come down to secure his lowland harvests. He invited us so earnestly to stop, that we accompanied him to the house of one of his relatives. There he introduced to us a nephew, a very handsome boy of fourteen, with glorious black eyes, and a rich color in his girlish cheek. The old man seemed extremely fond of the youth, and hugged and petted him like an infant. "Yes," said he, "he is a blessing, an honor; we must get him a wife soon; yes, he must be married before long." In speechless confusion, the pretty boy drooped his eyes, and crimsoned to his forehead at this rude desecration of his modesty.

Marriage takes place so early and so generally in Syria, and the women are so well guarded, that there is little chance for open immorality, especially in the country towns. There is no class of vicious bachelors, of men about town, who, having no wives of their own, illegally covet their neighbors'. But, although physical chastity is almost universal, moral chastity is, I suspect, very little appreciated. Conversation

is sufficiently coarse, and the language is positively luxuriant with foul double-meanings. The natives, necessarily, have a very poor idea of the purity of Frank women, from seeing them constantly unveiled, and familiarly sociable with men. I was sitting one evening in the tent of an American gentleman, who, with his wife, was my companion in a tour through the northern portion of Syria. Rude, inquisitive villagers lounged without, expressing their opinions of our appearance and manners, unrestrained by a fear of being overheard. "God!" said a voice, "what fools are these Franks! How can a Howaja like that burden himself with the company of a wife!"

"Doubtless," responded another, "he is afraid to leave her at home. Doubtless he wants to keep an eye on her."

"God!" resumed the first speaker, "why does he not put a veil on her shameless face!"

Syrian intellects were fast getting into a muddled state, when I was in the country, by reason of the vagaries of a certain neuralgic Pasha, who reigned at Beirut. This remarkable ruler's character seemed to consist of one

monstrous oddity, which had swallowed up every other of his mental peculiarities, as Aaron's rod swallowed its brother switches. The Pasha hated noise; hated it with the hatred of a madman. Everything that was constitutionally, or by accident, of a noisy nature, came in for a share of his aversion. With this sensibility of nerves, it is no wonder that he entertained a mortal antipathy to babies. Now, close by the gubernatorial palace was the cabin of a poor widow, who had what she considered the good fortune of possessing a baby of her own. As the said widow was a washerwoman, and in moderate circumstances at that, she was obliged to be absent from home much of the time, leaving her offspring to the care of good luck and his own instincts. The consequence was, that the poor urchin hung himself, and drowned himself, and chopped his fingers and toes off every day of his uneasy little existence. And, after every one of these misfortunes, there being no other consolation nigh, he lifted up his voice and wept until the Pasha raved and blasphemed in the innermost recesses of his palace. In vain did the janizaries thunder the indignation

of their master in the ears of the washerwoman and the washerwoman's baby. This unprotected female was, indeed, terribly frightened, and did all she could to abate the clamorous nuisance. But she was unable to be at home all the time, and the child almost always got into trouble just while she was gone, and invariably concluded that his griefs demanded an immediate and astounding uproar. Finally a guard of soldiers assaulted the house, ejected the vociferous garrison, and held it against the return of the garrison's mother. Lamentable outcries, tearings of hair, complaints, public and private, on the part of the dispossessed widow. But the oppressor was relentless, and continued to hold the house up to my departure from the country. So much for being a Pasha, and so much for having a baby. Lucky thing for mothers that all old bachelors are not Pashas or Pharaohs !

The above nuisance having been suppressed, the government turned its attention to another. There were some trees in the palace garden, where a number of birds used to collect and sing, whenever they felt so disposed. The

Pasha set his janizaries to drive the feathered serenaders away. The janizaries commenced a leisurely fire of musketry upon them, but the Pasha soon found that the guns made more noise than the birds. He ordered a stop to the firing, and the aerial choir, being no longer put out by the irreverent whistling of bullets, resumed its psalmody at the old place. The Pasha was furious; he had the trees cut down. This circumstance amazed all Beirut, as the reverence of an oriental for a tree is only second to his reverence for a fountain.

On occasion of one of the Pasha's abrupt apparitions in the streets of the city, an unlucky butcher lost several cents' worth of mutton, through the characteristic infirmity of his ruler. I will relate the circumstance: it will serve as a warning to the butchers of America; it will induce them to die rather than see their country subjugated by the Turks; and will, no doubt, give all their sympathies to the Czar, in his struggles against those unreasonable enemies. The Pasha was stalking through the market, when he observed a lean cat mewing, with clamorous perseverance, about a meat-

stall. He stopped, and eyed the owner of the stall with stern reproof, which gradually deepened into fierce indignation. The object of that terrible gaze trembled in his bloody breeches with fright, ignorant of his offense, but expecting every moment to feel his head hop off from his shoulders. The Pasha grew blacker and blacker at the supposed obstinacy of the butcher, and, arrived at the acme of his rage, thundered out: "In the name of God, why do you not feed that cat."

"I beg your excellency's pardon," stammered the butcher. "I did not see the cat."

"But you see him now?"

"I do, your Excellency."

"Well, feed him!" roared the Pasha.

"I will," said the butcher. "I beg God's forgiveness and your Excellency's for having neglected the animal." And he commenced cutting off generous slices of meat for grimal-kin, highly contented that the said slices did not come from his own ears. The Pasha stood gravely by, and saw the rations served out, until the voracious animal could positively hold no more mutton. "Now," said he to the

butcher, "never let me hear any more cats mewing about your stall for want of something to eat. And, as for this beast," he continued, turning to his janizaries, "I will not have him caterwauling about my city. Put him on board a ship going to some other country. Give him a sufficiency of meat for the voyage; charge the captain to take care of him, and in God's name let him not return!"

This order was actually obeyed, and the cat was shipped to Cyprus in an Arab coaster, since which it has fortunately not been heard of in Beirut.

The Pasha was also disturbed by the braying of a certain donkey, whose nasal clamor he got rid of by banishing the animal and its master to Tyre. But, perhaps, the most abominable of all the disturbers of his nerves, were some loud-voiced frogs that inhabited a ditch beneath the walls of the city. The janizaries were sent against them, as they had been against the birds, and soon captured numbers of the amphibious croakers. "O, your Excellency," said they to the Pasha, "we have taken the frogs; what shall be done with them?"

“Hang them,” replied the Pasha; “let them be hung after the manner of malefactors, among the Franks.” Accordingly, from the trees of the garden soon depended a score or so of the green-doubleted troubadours, swinging at the end of long strings, and kicking out their agonies with incomparable vivacity and duration.

But, speaking of the sins of Turkish Pashas in general, I may say that they are more of omission than of commission. The great complaint against them is usually for a deficiency of vigor in their administration. In remote districts, too, they may sometimes pillage their subjects a little, although this is more likely to be done by the underlings of office. Still, everywhere in Turkey, and among all ranks of officials, peculation in government funds is a most prevailing sin.

IX.

NOBLES, GEESE, AND SHEEP.

BHAMDUN, although entirely inhabited by Christians of the Greek and Maronite sects, is under the rule of a noble Druse house of the name of Abd-el-Melek. It is hardly necessary to inform the world, at this late day, that the Druses are heterodox Moslems, holding about as much of the true faith of Islam as the Mormons of Christianity. They have a prophet of their own, whom they call greater than Mohammed ; and they have fought and suffered heroically in the conservation of their unimportant tenets. Like the Jews, they fled from Egypt, wandered through the desert, and established themselves in Syria. Their oldest families live, I believe, in the Hauran, beyond Jordan ; but the majority of the nation, about sixty thousand souls, inhabit Mount Lebanon. The Druses of the mountain are governed by five great feudatory houses,

who have each their particular territory, possess and let extensive tracts of lands, and exact military service of their peasantry, whether Druse or Christian.

The ceremonies of their religion, and some of its doctrines, are secret, known only to those who are initiated under a bond of silence. Women as well as men are inducted into these mysteries; yet the number of the "enlightened" (*okkal*) is considerably exceeded by the number of the profane. No human being, says the Druse law, shall know our faith, who will not bind himself to drink no wine, to use no tobacco, to accept no money gained by fraud or violence. Most of the nation, most even of the nobility, think that this is going too fast and too far, and accordingly damn themselves with pipes and ill-gotten piasters, and remain inveterate know-nothings on the subject of theology. Some of the *okkal* are remarkable for their purity of life, their benevolence and their hospitality. One old religious official, who lived in a Druse village, about two miles from Bhamdun, had gained a virtuous and charitable notoriety among every sect in the mountain. No man,

they say, ever crossed his threshold without being refreshed from his table. I myself called on this venerable elder, and gratified him exceedingly by my thankful appreciation of his walnuts, dried figs, grapes, and honey.

The Druses make no attempts to proselyte, as they say that the number of the *enlightened* is fixed, and that God will never permit it to be less or greater while earth continues. There are Druses, according to their belief, in China, and Druses among the Protestants, particularly the English. An incident connected with this credence occurred during a visit of one of their religious sheikhs to one of our American missionaries. Looking the missionary steadily in the eye, the sheikh said: "Do you know such a seed (giving its name) in your country?"

This is the first sign of the initiated Druses, the test by which they discover a brother *okkal*; and the proper answer to it is: "It is sown in the hearts of the faithful." Our countryman had met with a religious book of this sect, picked up during the sackings and burnings of the war of 1840, and had taken some pains to study its curious mysteries. He recognized the

sign, therefore, but was of course too conscientious to deceive the old Druse by answering it.

The Abd-el-Meleks, although the rulers of Bhamdun, are not its landlords, and do not possess one of its hundred and fifty houses, nor an acre of its rocky but well-cultivated fields and vineyards. Nor, in general, is it otherwise with the eighteen or twenty other mountain villages over which they hold authority. But the family is vigorous and numerous, counting, I believe, about forty men. In nobility of blood it is accounted inferior to the other great Druse houses, the Jembelots, the Bonekeds, the Tell-hooks, and Aamads ; and it has attained consequence chiefly within the lifetime and by the talents of its present aged leader. Even yet its chiefest distinction perhaps is, that it raises and owns the finest blood-horses in all Mount Lebanon.

I noticed that the villagers always treated their sheikhs with great respect, never sitting in their presence unless invited. Young sprigs of the mountain nobility sometimes tried to impress us with a sense of their own dignity, by

not offering this invitation, and thus keeping respectable people standing in their conceited little presence. The demeanor of the elder and more influential sheikhs was, on the contrary, always bland, civil, and sociable, at least towards the worthier and wealthier of their subjects.

A few days after our settlement at Bhamdun, one of the Abd-el-Meleks, named Nebhan, called on the Hakeem, and requested that he would soon make the light of his presence to shine on their palaces. The day following we mounted our horses, and rode off over a stony path, paved here and there with broad flaggings of natural limestone, and winding loftily along one of the rudest ridges of the mountain. At the opening of a narrow valley, which descended rapidly into an enormous ravine, we came upon the massive masonry of the feudal halls. Plain, heavy, oblong quadrangles of well-hewn, well-cemented stone, the monotony of their sombre walls relieved by arched and columned windows, they towered, like protecting giants, at the entrance of a slovenly Druse village. Three blood-horses, with slender limbs, powerful

shoulders, thin necks, fine muzzles, gentle eyes, and pedigrees longer than those of the first families of Virginia, were tethered around the principal gate. The venerable head of the house received us with multitudinous compliments, and made us sit down by him on the divan. There entered, a moment after, the Hector of this Priam, Sheikh Yusef, the real present leader of the family, a man of about forty, with aquiline visage, gray, unsettled eyes, a sensual mouth, and an expression of mingled guile and audacity. The conversation fell upon politics. The Sheikh Yusef surprised us by asking what effect a then very late resignation of Lord Palmerston would have on the Eastern policy of England. "I tell you," said he, continuing the subject, "that Turkey never will flourish, as long as there are so many Frank powers intermeddling in her affairs. She is exactly in the situation of a certain invalid who had a consultation of five doctors over him. One doctor said that the patient's trouble was yellow bile; another insisted that it was black bile; another, that phlegm was choking him;

another, that his blood was perilously out of order; and a fifth declared that windiness was carrying him to the grave. Each one stuck obstinately to his own opinion, and administered physic for the case as he understood it. The consequence was that the patient died suddenly, and (God permitting) Turkey will do the same." This was rather anticipative of the famous declaration of Nicholas about the "sick man." The play in the story is on the five great powers of Europe, compared with the five causes which Arab physicians allot to disease. The causes, as Sheikh Yusef hinted, are yellow-bile, black-bile, phlegm, blood, and wind.

Pipes were handed to us, and succeeded by a ration of sherbet, that is, sugared water, flavored with rose. A boy followed up, with a basin and towel to cleanse our paws and muzzles. Sheikh Nebhan then invited the Hakeem into his palace, to prescribe for his wife. I followed, under the doctorial wing of my companion, and found myself, for the first and last time, in the harem of an oriental. In a small apartment, three women, the mother,

wife, and sister of the sheikh, reposed upon low, free-and-easy divans. They shrouded their faces in white veils, as we entered, and returned modestly muffled responses to our salutations. The sheikh sat down with us, and encouraged the women to talk, by chatting sociably, like a cozy, good-natured husband. The mother soon dropped her ghostly mask, and exposed a visage pale, wrinkled, emaciated, but lit by a kindly smile. The others followed her example, discovering to my gaze high aquiline features, which would not have been handsome even without their corpse-like pallor. Some unimportant symptoms having been detailed, and a prescription administered, the conversation cackled away to other topics. The eldest lady, finding that the Hakeem had a mother at home, seemed greatly interested in the fact, asked how old she was, compared the age with her own, and ended by pitying this American parent for being so widely separated from her son. She then inquired what was our religion. The Hakeem mentioned the principal doctrines of Christianity. "Ah!" said she, "Praise be to God! That is exactly our religion. How

very remarkable that we should hold the same belief!" The others nodded confirmatively; and there was a general salvo of Praise be to God! over this enormous falsehood. This is one of the pious peculiarities of the Druses. They pile hypocrisy on the back of mystery, and pretend to be of the religion of whoever has them by the button-hole; that is to say, supposing that an Arab ever had such a thing as a button-hole about him. The straightest of the *enlightened*, if in a Moslem community, will go to the mosque, imitate all the prostrations of Islamism, and talk fanatically about the Koran, the seventh heaven, and the sacred camel of the prophet. Among the Catholics, were the ruling powers in exterminating mood, he would frequent the church, use holy water copiously, cross himself with orthodox precision, and swear by the saints and the Virgin Mary. One is puzzled to decide between this stupendous methodical hypocrisy and the cruel, uncompromising zeal which delights in a stout stake and a rousing fire.

After a call of twenty minutes on these respectable eastern ladies, we rose, and set off

for home. I subsequently learned some particulars concerning the morals and history of a certain influential Druse sheikh, called Ali. An ambitious, intriguing, turbulent son of the mountain, he was perpetually getting ready kettles of hot water, for himself or somebody else. Having broken into, or rather, to do him justice, having been forced into, an open rebellion, he was attacked by an overwhelming force of Turkish troops, and had to fly for the sheltering deserts of Hauran. His old father followed with the family chest of money, containing about ten thousand dollars, and was robbed, by a party of irreverent Arabs, of his money and a favorite mare. He got back to the hereditary seat, unmolested by the government, which now had nothing to gain from him, but almost broken-hearted at the loss of his mare and his piasters. Sheikh Ali was blown about by the winds of adverse circumstance for some time, and at last sought refuge in the house of Mr. Wood, the energetic British consul at Damascus. The pasha, like a cunning old spider, put on an air of indifference, and even friendliness ; but, as

soon as the Sheikh Ali ventured into the streets, clapped hands on him, and stored him away quietly in a corner of his own den. Hereupon the British lion wagged his tail indignantly, and the Turk, in a fright, allowed his prisoner to be carried back to the consulate. Mr. Wood sent to Constantinople, representing the rebel's capacity and good intentions, and requesting that he might be restored to his sheikhdom. Indeed, to give him his due once more, he has always been a reasonably good ruler, as rulers go in Lebanon.

In the mean time, the astute Ali put two strings to his bow ; on the one hand, he called Mr. Wood his lord, his savior, his only refuge ; on the other, he wrote secretly to the pasha, praying "to be delivered from this hog of an Englishman." The consul, as cunning as himself, learned all his tricks, repaid his hollow compliments in kind, but accomplished his deliverance, for the honor of the British lion. The pardon came, and Ali departed in peace, having first scratched the back of the English hog with innumerable flatteries and protestations of gratitude.

A day or two subsequent to our call on the Abd-el-Meleks, one of their servants came to Bhamdun, bearing a kid to the Hakeem, as a bleating testimonial of thanks, for his services. The creature was tied in the little court-yard, and fed, daily, with slops, grass, leaves, and all those crumbs of comfort that kids desire. He soon became a kind of awful pet to Master Charley, or, as Yusef and Jurjus phrased it, Howaja Sharley, a timid child, who held quadrupeds in particular fear, from camels to mice. There was something terrible to him in the idea of four legs; a sort of dreadful possibility of doing his small person four-fold damage. When he was scampering ahead of us, in our walks about the vineyards, the sight of a distant calf would always send him rapidly under the protecting shadow of our coat-tails.

He used to walk slowly down the stairs into Kiddy's domain, pause on the lower step and look doubtfully at the animal's physiognomy, to see if it was at all ferocious that morning, then descend from his post, and advance cautiously towards the prisoner, with an offering

of grape-tendrils or mulberry-leaves. Occasionally, Kiddy would get the small lad's fingers into his mouth, or make a successful dash at his white apron, which, to his inexperienced eyes, probably seemed to be of milk. Squeaking hysterically at these frightful demonstrations of cannibalism, Howaja Sharley would jump backwards, and usually tumble over a straw, or a bit of orange-peel, and come down on the top of his head.

Soon after, the Abd-el-Meleks sent the Hakeem an additional present of a couple of geese. These were the only birds of their race that I ever had the honor of meeting in Syria. In fact, they were foreigners, and had emigrated from Europe only a few years before, under the guardianship of an enterprising Frenchman. He made over a number of his gabbling protégés to the Abd-el-Meleks, within whose domains he had established a silk-factory ; and they, ignorant that the Hakeem came from a country where geese-feathers are so plenty as to be used to confer distinction on malefactors, sent him these two specimens, as a great rarity. They were lodged in the court-

yard, with Kiddy, and accommodated with a tub of water, in lieu of a fish-pond. They took a bath immediately after their journey, and then waddled through an inspection of their new domain with cacklings of considerable approbation. They were a most home-like spectacle to us, and brought back to our memories the brooklets and puddles which refreshed our truant childhood.

As they were the first geese (feathered ones) who ever visited Bhamdun, they excited an extraordinary astonishment and fear in the native population. For some days the yard remained entirely clear of boys and beggars ; nor did even respectable grown persons traverse it without an evident hurry and solicitude. The gander soon discovered his terribleness, and flew at every small or shabby individual with alarming screams and flappings of his pinions. The threatened person very generally took to flight, and, if not too much scared, sometimes shut the gate behind him for safety. Then would the web-footed gladiator waddle back, vaingloriously, to his spouse, and gabble strenuously in celebration of his victory. As for Howaja Sharley, the geese

took him prisoner and nearly massacred him with fright on the morning after their arrival. I was enjoying a nargileh in the parlor, listening to the stamps and squeals of our horses below, when I was startled from my mouth-piece by a succession of agonizing screams from the court-yard. I rushed into the hall, and leaned over the railing, expecting to see the small lad torn limb from limb by a mouse, or trampled into tatters by Kiddy. I beheld one of the most ludicrous groups ever fashioned out of a boy and a goose ; a group worthy of being made memorable by the chisel of Thom or the pencil of Landseer. The gander, flapping his wings victoriously, had fast hold of the white apron, and was fairly leaning back on his tail in a vigorous attempt to drag the small lad from the stair-way. Howaja Sharley, with mouth wide open and vocal, and with tears of terror on his fat cheeks, pulled feebly in the opposite direction, being nearly paralyzed by his assailant's sudden attack and extreme ferocity. Before I could offer my arbitration, old Yusef made a clamorous sally from his basement-kitchen, and beat off the feather-

ed desperado by an energetic assault and battery in the rear. The small lad accordingly escaped without a scratch, but so mortally frightened, that, for a week after, nothing, not even the wishful eyes and bleatings of Kiddy, could tempt him alone into the court-yard.

Speaking of geese, and especially of goats, leads me naturally, and, as it were, through green pastures, to the subject of sheep. There are considerable flocks of sheep on Mount Lebanon, and they form a pretty addition to its life and scenery. You see them, sometimes huddled together and creeping up or down the declivities, in distant diminutiveness; sometimes scattered, and nibbling, in tranquil, woolly contentment, at the scanty herbage; sometimes standing, in a kind of brown study, on the edge of a precipice, gazing at the under landscape, and apparently wondering at the extreme bigness of the world. These good sheep are never driven, but collect at the call of the shepherd, and follow him, because they know his voice. They are larger than our breed; so tall, in fact, that asses sometimes graze among them without being easily dis-

tinguished, at a little distance, from their nibbling competitors. Their flesh is particularly well-flavored, but their wool is rather thin, being adapted, with great judgment, to the climate. Hogs being unpopular in the east, among Christians as well as Moslems, sheep supply their place in the economy and affections of the household. Almost every citizen of Bhamdun usually has his family sheep. This favored, though fated quadruped, enjoys as many domestic privileges as an Irishman's pig, and is waited on in a style of considerably more gentility. He is generally tethered in a clean place by the door-way, and, at night, often shares the protection of his master's roof. If there is a daughter in the family, who has reached the maturity of eight or nine years, his oleaginous welfare is confided to her. Every morning (loaded, perhaps, with some incubus of a small brother) she leads the animal to the spring, and carefully washes his dainty wool. Then she feeds him all day, until the surfeited creature is fain to lie down from sheer inability in legs to uphold so much dinner. Not satisfied with this amount of

gluttony, his little nurse nearly kills him with kindness, by stuffing wads of young grape-leaves, or other provender, into his mouth, and holding his jaws together until he swallows the said pellets to get rid of them. As I watched these childish shepherdesses, with each her flock of one, I used to think of that ballad whose milk and water pathos moistened the dryness of my school-books.

“ Mary had a little lamb,
Whose fleece was white as snow ;
And everywhere that Mary went,
The lamb was sure to go.”

I also thought of that ewe lamb in the prophet Nathan’s parable, which came so at full butt upon the guilty conscience of king David. It gave me a new idea of the objects of the poor man therein mentioned ; exciting a suspicion that he was actuated not so much by an amiable fondness for pets as by an anticipatory relish for well-fed mutton.

In consequence of their full diet, the household sheep of Mount Lebanon soon become unmanageably stout, as polite people express it, and sometimes take their victuals without

rising from their corpulent recumbency. In this state they are very much troubled by their tails, which grow so inconveniently big as to be almost untransportable. For the Syrian sheep, like those of the Cape of Good Hope, have tails as broad as their backs, which descend expansively behind, after the fashion of our revolutionary fathers' coats. As the animal fattens, this appendage grows larger and more unctuous, until it becomes a huge sack of nearly pure mutton suet. The people told me that the tail of a fat sheep often weighed thirty-five pounds, but that they had sometimes known them of nearly twice that gravity. They are never absolutely carried about on wheel-barrows, as travelers relate; but a shingle is often fastened to the under side, to prevent irritative contact with pebbles and grape-vine stumps. In a very fat case, two wheels might, perhaps, be attached to this machine, for the purpose of diminishing friction and so rendering locomotion less laborious; but I doubt if a Lebanon peasant ever contrived them. During my stay in Bhamdun, a respectable family was thrown into distress by an accident resulting from the

unwieldliness of these living tallow-bags. A remarkably stout-bodied sheep incautiously jumped from a wall about four feet in height, and the shock dislocated his tail. Medical aid proved unavailing; the injury was in too delicate and vital a part; the animal sunk rapidly, and the owner had to kill him to prevent mortification.

This is the only kind of sheep in Syria; and the inhabitants have no idea of any other. "Raheel," I said one day, "what singular tails your sheep have! You must excuse me for laughing at them."

"Why are they singular?" responded Raheel, looking up with a wonder as innocent as my own.

"Oh, they are so large!"

"But what kind of tails have your sheep?"

"Why, little ones, about as long as your finger, and with no more fat on them than a kitten's tail."

"Dear me!" said Raheel, her large eyes drowned in amazement. "How very queer they must look!"

Indeed, she was partially right there, for, ex-

cept the humorous twist in a pig's peroration, there is nothing of the kind more comical than the sudden, nervous wiggle-waggle of a lamb's tail.

Raheel's wonder at the outlandish termination of our sheep was equaled by the amazement of the mountaineers at what they considered the eccentricities of American wheat. The stalk of the Syrian mountain wheat is not over two feet in height, and the head is venerable with a long beard like that of our rye. The Hakeem, wishing to introduce our variety into the country, procured some seed of the true Genesee growth and planted it on one of the warm exposures of Mount Lebanon. It seemed to take a wonderful liking to the soil and climate, and shot up confidently to the height of five or more feet. On the natives it produced some such impression, probably, as would the apparition of a long-legged, spindling, gawky, clean-shaved Yankee. The mountaineers used to gather round and survey its beardless prolixity in amazement. "In the name of God!" said one man, "why does your wheat grow so tall?"

“The people of our country are tall,” replied the Hakeem, “and require tall wheat.”

“But why has it no beard?”

“It is the fashion of our people not to wear the beard; and the wheat respects the customs of the people.”

“O Hakeem! thou art joking with us. But the wheat is wonderful. What has God wrought?”

X.

BEIRUT TALES AND LEBANON CEDARS.

FROM the tails of oriental sheep (so lengthily treated in previous pages), there is an easy transition to tales of oriental fancy. One of these usually grotesque narratives was related to the Hakeem, on the following provocation. A Syrian friend was enlarging to him on the melancholy fact, that a man who knows a great truth cannot always declare it, without incurring censure, or even persecution, from the mistaken and testy public. To support this rather antique proposition, he told the following story, which cannot be found in the Arabian Nights :

“ There was once a certain kadi, named Abu Hamood, who was inordinately fond of mules. His stables were uproarious with them, and yet not a month passed, but he added some new costly specimen to his stock. He used to visit them every day, fondle and hug them all

around, kiss their long silky ears, and receive their bites and kicks like so many civilities and benedictions. In short, this passion mastered him to such a degree that he ultimately became a very wicked kadi, and would stick at no false judgment or extortion, to possess himself of a tempting piece of mule-flesh. Accordingly the spirit of evil laid a trap for him, and the kadi fell into it ; and this was the manner of his fall :

“ One day, as he walked in the streets of Bagdad—looking right and left for mules—he met a Mughrebee, of an exceedingly dark complexion. This Mughrebee was leading the finest mule that had ever been seen in the city ; so beautiful, in fact, that it was like the rising sun for strength, and like the full moon for elegance. Abu Hamood stopped in front of the animal, utterly bewildered and struck blind by its extraordinary graces. In the mean time, the man was walking the mule up and down, before the gates of the kadi’s palace. At last, Abu Hamood spoke to him, and said, with a trembling voice, such was his agitation :

“ ‘ O, Mughrebee, whose mule is that ? ’

“‘It is my master’s,’ replied the other. ‘He is a Mughrebee, like myself; but he is a prince, while I am a slave.’

“‘And where is thy master?’ continued Abu Hamood.

“‘He has gone to the bazaars, to buy silks and jewels; and he bade me walk the mule up and down before this palace, until he returned.’

“‘O, Mughrebee!’ said Abu Hamood, ‘wilt thou not let me take hold of the bridle of this mule, and enjoy the exquisite pleasure of leading him a few paces? And may God reward thee for thy benignity!’

“‘Take it, O friend,’ said the other; ‘and I will even thank thee: I have occasion to eat; I will go to the pastry-cook’s, and return in a moment.’

“Abu Hamood took the bridle with a trembling hand, and led the mule up and down, in such a state of enchantment that an hour passed away as if it had been a minute. His servants espied him, and rushed out to relieve him of his strange occupation; but he drove them away, and would suffer no one to touch the bridle besides himself. At last he

began to wonder at the Mughrebee's prolonged absence, and looked anxiously up and down the street, hoping that he had lost his way, or broken his neck, so that he might never return. In short, no Mughrebee appeared ; and, after another hour—which, by reason of his anxiety, seemed to him like a century—Abu Hamood stealthily led the beautiful mule into his own court-yard. There he gave it to his chief servant, and told him to put it into the best stall, and provide it with a bed of silk, instead of straw. But the mule broke away from the servant, and followed the kadi into the saloon, stepping as noiselessly as if his feet had been shod with roses. And thus, when Abu Hamood seated himself on a divan, the mule stood before him, and, affectionately putting his nose into his new master's bosom, began to eat some raisins that were secreted there. The kadi was enchanted at the animal's tameness and gentleness, and allowed him to nibble at the raisins, until he had raisins enough. When he would eat no more, the kadi said :

“ ‘ Doubtless, this poor mule is thirsty ; go, and bring him some water.’

“One of the servants brought a sheraby (a narrow-necked jar) of water, and a tray into which it might be poured, and then retired. The mule walked to the door, and closed it with one of his fore-feet ; and then, while his master was regarding him with unutterable admiration, returned to the sheraby, and, with a sudden bound, leaped into it, and disappeared. Abu Hamood was struck so perfectly aghast, by this feat, that he could not even cry out ; but stood there, with his mouth open, and his eyes fixed on the sheraby. Presently two long silky ears rose through the narrow mouth of the vessel, and wagged themselves in a malicious manner at the kadi ; as much as to say, ‘Here I am ; why don’t you catch me ?’ The poor man screamed with joy, and made a sudden snatch at the ears, which eluded his grasp, and disappeared in the sheraby. Whenever he peered into the opening, there was nothing to be seen but water ; but the moment he rose, and drew back, the long silky ears stood out, and wagged at him, as before. And this continued, until the kadi was quite wild with excitement ; the ears dodging him every time,

and he using his utmost efforts to seize them, and so recover his mule. He made such an uproar, with his jumping and shouting, that the servants hurried to the saloon, and were confounded to find their master dancing and hallooing insanely around a sheraby of water.

“‘Come, and help me,’ cried the kadi. ‘My mule has got into the sheraby. Help me get him out.’

“‘Your excellency is joking with us,’ answered the servants. ‘It is impossible that a mule should get into the sheraby.’

“‘I tell you that he is there,’ insisted the kadi. ‘I saw him jump in, and I saw his ears sticking out.’

“‘God help our poor master!’ exclaimed the servants. ‘His mind is departing from him.’

“‘It is a lie!’ roared the kadi. ‘I am more sane than any of you. If the mule is not in the sheraby, where is he?’

“‘Doubtless,’ replied the servants, ‘your excellency has led him out secretly, in order to play a joke upon us.’

“‘It is false!’ screamed the kadi. ‘He is

in the sheraby, as truly as you are a set of ignoramuses.'

"Abu Hamood's four wives, and all his relatives, came, and tried, in vain, to convince him that there was no mule in the sheraby. He only foamed at the mouth, because of their unbelief; and would let none of them touch the vessel, for fear that they should break it, and injure the mule. Accordingly they concluded him to be stark crazy, and sent, in a hurry, for the best doctors of the city, to prescribe for his case. The doctors decided that his mind had departed from him; and ordered that he should be abundantly whipped, and very stingily fed, for three days, on bread and water. It was of no use for the kadi to struggle, and roar, and swear by the tail of the prophet's mule that he spoke nothing but the truth. He was thrown upon the floor by three stout kavasses, who beat the very dust out of him with their canes, and then dragged him away, and forced him into a gloomy dungeon, appointed for the madmen of Bagdad. Here, he was fed with bread and water—and very short rations at that—until three days had passed over. At the ex-

piration of that time, an old Imam came to the cell ; and, putting his head between the bars, and, wagging his beard mournfully, said :

“ ‘ O, kadi ! O, dearly beloved friend ! has thy mind returned to thee ? Art thou convinced, now, that there was no mule in the sheraby ? ’

“ ‘ No ! ’ roared Abu Hamood, in great wrath. ‘ I am not convinced. I saw him jump in, and I saw his ears sticking out.’

“ Accordingly they gave him another beating, and three days more of bread and water. And now Abu Hamood began to reflect calmly on his position, and to commune with himself, after the following fashion :

“ ‘ Well, here I am, in a lamentable case, indeed. Because I tell what I have seen, people call me crazy, and whip me, and feed me on short allowance of bread and water. By lying a little, I might deliver myself from prison, and get my house and family back again. I saw the mule jump into the sheraby, and I saw his ears sticking out ; but, if I swear to it till my dying day, nobody will ever believe me. I

may as well say that I was mistaken, and so find escape from this persecution.'

"At the end of three days, the Imam came again, and, with a woeful wag of his beard, said :

"'O, kadi! O, dearly beloved friend! has thy mind returned to thee?'

"'Yes,' replied the kadi, 'praise be to God! He has restored me my wits. I see that I was mistaken, and confess that there was no mule in the sheraby.'

"'What has God wrought!' said the Imam; and he wagged his beard for happiness, as he had before done for sorrow. He sent immediately for the family of the kadi, and they all came, weeping for joy, to take their relative out of prison. Abu Hamood was carried to his house, and plentifully fed, while his friends crowded around him, to congratulate him on his recovery. After a while they arose, and left him to slumber; but placed dishes of fruit, and a sheraby of water beside him, so that he might refresh himself again on waking. The kadi slept soundly, and dreamed of thousands of most beautiful mules, each one of which was

led about by a dark-visaged Mughrebee, until suddenly they all leaped into a multitude of water-jars, and disappeared. He awoke with astonishment and vexation, and his eyes fell upon the sheraby at his bedside. There, just as glossy as ever, were the same long ears, wagging at him in the usual tantalizing manner. But Abu Hamood was wiser now than he had been. ‘Ah!’ said he, ‘you may shake your ears at me as much as you please; but I will swear that I never saw them. I am not going to be beaten, and half-starved again, for telling a truth which nobody believes.’

“Accordingly the ears disappeared, and the kadi rose, and pitched the sheraby out of the window, without so much as peeping into it. And from that day unto the day of his death, he was never known to look at a mule, nor to contradict public opinion on any subject whatsoever.”

So much for a Syrian tale, the moral of which accounts for the persecution of Galileo, and for the scorn heaped on Columbus, and for the milk in divers other cocoa-nuts. To this I shall append an incidental sketch of an individual

whose existence imaged to my comprehension the history of Simeon Stylites, and those other unsocial saints, who illustrated the earlier Christian ages by their filthiness and fanaticism. The Hakeem and I made a trip to the cedars, and to the summit of Jebel Mekmel, the highest peak of Lebanon. A day's ride through the rudest portion of the mountain, over the most awful roads possible, brought us to a high, temperate region, green here and there with patches of sweet turf, and musical with copious rivulets and fountains. Decaying snow-banks often lined our path, glaring in spectral contrast with immense thickets of gorgeous oleanders. We reposed by the side of a gigantic spring of the purest water, bursting up from a large cavity in the rock, with astonishing violence. We flung stones of two or three pounds weight into the boiling caldron, and saw them rise like chips, almost to the surface, and skate away for several feet, down the current. The water was as cold as its mother snows on the mountain above;* so chilly that, heated as we were by the burning sun, we could scarcely

* Fahr. 40 deg. all the year round.

endure to hold it in our mouths. A rivulet of really respectable dimensions bursts from this spring, and rolls hurriedly down deep valleys, to mingle with that sea which it can behold even from its birth-place. It is the largest stream that I ever saw from one source, except at the head-waters of the Syrian river Orontes. There, at the eastern base of the northernmost ridges of Lebanon, I gazed on a river of twenty-five or thirty feet in width, by three feet in depth, rising silently, yet swiftly, like some sudden destiny, from a single fountain.

Half a mile or thereabouts below this chilly fountain, the stream is spanned by a natural bridge of majestic vastness. Two mighty rocks of limestone reach one hundred and sixty feet across a deep ravine, and unite midway in a solid and regular joining. The floor of the bridge is nearly ten yards thick, and hangs at a clear height of seventy feet above the noisy rush of the rivulet below. Seen from underneath, the grand, even, unchangeable arch is the sublimest solitary thing that is discoverable in Mount Lebanon. The giant abutments remind one strikingly of a work of art, so curi-

ously are they composed of a seamed conglomerate of limestone. On either side, the natural walls of the chasm rise eighty or ninety feet in smooth precipitousness, verging towards each other, until, a little distance above the bridge, they are only separated by a sombre fissure, two or three yards in width, through which the torrent bursts with impatient foam and uproar. We entered this narrow avenue of waters, climbed a little way along its slippery sides, looked up perpendicularly at a slender ribbon of sky, and retreated again before the driving spray and mist.

We slept at the village which I immortalized by my famous misadventure in mule-mounting. We were four or five thousand feet above the sea, in the midst of a country like a highland paradise. To the east, we looked up into a vast amphitheatre, formed by the backbone ridge of Lebanon, and two gigantic spurs which projected towards the Mediterranean. Far above us, on the enormous slope—a single green speck in its terrible aridity—was the famous grove of cedars, the only remnant of the mighty verdure from which Solomon drew his temple. Down-

wards we gazed into an astonishing valley, cracked at its bottom by a huge, precipitous chasm. Trees of the temperate climates—oaks, walnuts, and pines—mingled with the familiar, home-like verdure of potato-fields, and Indian corn. Hamlets dotted the slopes of the stupendous landscape, dimly visible through the rich foliage of their gardens and orchards. Right opposite, on the other side of the ravine, was the large village of Ehden, or Eden ;* and, far below it, faintly specking with blackness the yellow walls of the chasm, were the windows and portals of a rock-excavated convent. Rivulets rushed from the tops of the ridges to the extreme depths of the basin, their continuous foam shining through the vast distances, like glittering ribbons of silver. West of us, the valley descended, and opened towards the sea, expiring and broadening into the luxuriant plain of Tripoli. And there lay the city, amid its orange and lemon gardens, looking out on a boundless expanse of waters, dazzling with an imperial robe of sunlight, and fanned by the

* “All the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon.”
—Ezek. xxxi.; 16.

wings of fitful breezes. It was a landscape of the grandest loveliness, whose memory has risen in gigantic beauty on my spirit, even amid the granite glories of Switzerland.

We descended obliquely into the valley, skirted the grim precipitousness of the great chasm, and rose again toward the cedars, and the top of the mountain. An hour or two of climbing carried us away from the cornfields, the oaks, and the walnuts, and brought us to steep acclivities of stony earth, barely flecked, here and there, with a pale, stunted vegetation. We climbed a last rapid ascent, and entered into the shadow of the great cedars. On a clump of rocky knolls, they stand far away from other trees, like a company of ascetics, or prophets, retired from a wicked world. The breath of the mountain snow-drifts soughed through their branches, and swept downward, over corn-fields and vines, to play with its brother breezes on the sunlit floor of the sea. A lonely emerald on the naked bosom of the mountain, the grove seemed like a single hopeful thought in some spirit of desolation.

I thought there might be about five hundred trees, of which one-fourth or one-fifth were ancient and colossal, the others of a comparatively modern and slender growth. The old ones usually broke vehemently into several enormous branches, at ten or twenty feet from the ground, and grew scragged and irregular, as if old age, and the consciousness of long experience, made them whimsical and opinionated. The younger trunks were generally free from these eccentricities, and sometimes showed a remarkable straightness. A curious effect was produced by the declination of the branches, and by the broad sloping sheets of verdure which their upper surfaces presented. We had no means of measuring the trunks, and we contented ourselves with pacing around the roots of some of the more gigantic of the brotherhood. All that I will venture to affirm is, that several were between thirty-five and forty feet in circumference. One of the very largest was almost entirely hollow, and showed, by various signs, that it had been used for a human habitation. Not far from it, towards the lower extremity of the grove, stood a rude

stone cabin, shut up, and apparently untenanted. We stared at it a moment, wondering what its use might be, and strolled back into the thickest of the shadow. We were looking, in puzzled desire, at the branches above us, longing for a cane or a cedar cone, when a stranger approached us—a slender man, of twenty-two or twenty-three, of a yellowish bronze complexion, dark eyes, a pleasant smile, and costumed after the fashion of the country. Yet he was evidently not a native; for his tint was neither that of a denizen of the Syrian cities, nor of the Syrian deserts. He advanced hesitatingly from among the giant trees, and bade us good morning, in broken Arabic. My linguistic friend responded, and they struck up a conversation: “Do you live in Ehden?” said the Hakeem.

“No; I live in the little hut, in the lower part of the grove.”

“How came you to live there? What is your occupation?”

“I am a hermit. I am trying to find holiness, by living alone.”

“And have you found it?”

“ Alas ! not yet. Not as I hope to do.”

“ How long have you lived here ?”

“ Three years. I lived two years in the large hollow tree above us. Then the people of the villages helped me to build this hut.”

“ But you are not an Arab ?”

“ No ; I am an Abyssinian. I came from my own country, on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in hopes of making myself holy. I did not succeed. There is a great deal of wickedness at Jerusalem, as there is everywhere among men. Then, I sought for a lonely place, where I might be by myself. I found this quiet grove, and this hollow tree. I am not yet holy ; but I am better than at Jerusalem.”

“ But how do you live ? Have you no labor ?”

“ The shepherds and the people of the villages often give me food. The monks, too, in the convent below, are kind to me. And, sometimes, I break off cedar-branches and cones, for Frank travelers, who come this way, and get a little baksheesh from them.”

“ It must be cold here, in the winter.”

“ I cannot stay here in the winter. The

snow is very deep. I go down to Tripoli, and live there until spring returns. All the people of these upper villages go down to the plain in winter. Here, they could not keep warm."

" Well you must break off some cedar-cones for us, and we will give you a baksheesh."

He hurried away, with a rejoiced smile, and soon returned, bearing a long cord, to the end of which was attached a stout hook. A few dexterous flings among the branches, brought down as many cones and switches as we desired. The former were convenient souvenirs, with hard heads and tough constitutions; but the sticks were so small, scraggy, and easily broken, that we despaired of ever making canes of them, and soon threw them away.

" What brittle wood!" said the Hakeem. " There is a great historic doubt resting upon that weakness of fibre. The material is evidently unfit for building purposes. It has almost no grain, and snaps in your fingers, like touch-wood. Now, the question arises, how Solomon came to build his temple of it. One of my learned friends among the American missionaries contends that he did not. He says

that we do not know, very accurately, the ancient Hebrew names for plants, and that the phrase, translated 'the cedar of Lebanon,' perhaps should be 'the pine of Lebanon.' The pine of Lebanon is a strong wood, and is used in great quantities, for building. The cedar is scarce; and we have no proof at all that forests of it ever existed. In short, my friend reasons very well, and I am pretty much of his opinion."

The bleatings of a flock of sheep, which a woolly-coated individual was leading by us, towards the top of the mountain, brought us back from the temple of Solomon, to the subject of luncheon.

"We will have some bread and milk," said the Hakeem. "O, shepherd! O, shepherd! listen! will you sell us some of your milk?"

The man checked his flock; and, catching one of the most motherly ewes, led her towards us.

"There is the milk, O my lords!" said he; "but, in the name of God, where will you have it?"

Yes; there was the milk—a whole bagful

of it—but the difficulty was to come at it. It seemed a little too innocent and pastoral to lie down, and take it warm, like Romulus and Remus, from its pendulous magazine. The hermit saw our perplexity, and dissipated it by producing from his cabin a stout wooden pail. I was dubious about its sufficient cleanliness ; but, as they say that every man must eat his peck of dirt, I determined not to struggle with destiny. The shepherd milked vigorously ; the ewe gave down her fluidity in a proper spirit, and the vessel was soon foaming with an abundance of fine milk. We soaked our bits of swarthy bread in it, and made a glorious luncheon. We paid the shepherd for his hospitality, and gave a baksheesh, of rather more than ordinary value, to the hermit. He thanked us with blessings in broken Arabic, and with his soft, timid, womanish smile. We left him to grow holy in that sublime loneliness, and saw his form disappear among the shadows of the southing cedars.

We reached the top of the mountain, and wore out our shoes with running over the loose sharp stones of its surface. We were nine

thousand six hundred feet above the level of the sea; and the under landscape was consequently immense and magnificent. Still, we were somewhat disappointed, inasmuch as objects, seen from that altitude, lost much of their distinctness and individuality. The enchanted verdure of that almost incomparable valley, the Bukaa, was dim and hazy, seeming like an obscure brilliant, or a partially-faded flower. The outlines of the summit were bare and rounded, streaked, here and there, with long snow-drifts, and utterly destitute of vegetable or animal life, except dry weeds and a few vagrant, outcast butterflies. On a former visit, the Hakeem scared up a bear, and threw stones at him, as he waddled, in an undignified hurry, down the declivity.

X I.

SYRIAN FACTS AND FANCIES.

If the religious phraseology of the east came, at this present day, from anything deeper and sincerer than the lips, then would it be something admirable. It so overpowers every subject of oriental conversation, it so blooms with rich poetic imagery, it is so perfumed with a by-gone piety, that it often strikes the stranger as beautiful and even imposing. But, on the other hand, it is so evidently rootless, sapless, a mere conventionalism, second-hand moonlight, that, after changing in the observer's mind from the sublime to the ridiculous, it ends by ceasing to attract his notice.

Hurrying on horseback over the wild and rocky road which leads from the Bukaa to Beirut, the Hakeem and I overtook a party of half a dozen desert Arabs, who, mounted on their camels, and see-sawing back and forth with the long, uneasy step of the animals, were leisurely

journeying across the mountain. "Peace be with you," said the Hakeem. "On you be peace," was the reply. "Where are you going?" continued my comrade, surprised, perhaps, to see them traveling towards the populous seacoast. "To the door of God," answered one; "we have nothing to do."

Now, what this devout-tongued nomad meant was, that, being out of work, they were looking for a job, or some other means of subsistence.

But this religious small-talk of the east is a subject so hackneyed, that I shall immediately dismount from it to show off the paces of a few choice Arab superstitions. The only weapon, except Kanaan's blunderbuss, in whose martial company I journeyed through Syria, was a fowling-piece, presented to the Hakeem by a friendly Bostonian traveler. As the donor forewarned him, it was a pretty safe piece at both ends, never bursting, and seldom hitting anything; for it had a wonderful faculty at spreading shot, and covered a considerable portion of the horizon at every discharge. In short, it was very much like some enterprising

people, who, by attempting to hit a little of everything, generally do execution on nothing.

Near Baalbec, as the Hakeem was riding with this eccentric gun on his shoulder, he discovered a fine hawk sitting on a large stone not far from our path, and looking at us with an expression of remarkable fearlessness. Ashamed to shoot so bold and handsome a bird without provocation, he threw some pebbles at him to make him rise. The hawk just balanced himself on his gray wings, and then sunk back to his insolent and superb repose. This was too much, and the Hakeem let fly at him with an ounce of buckshot. The feathered hero never stirred; and even treated a second discharge with the same indolent contempt. We gave him a hurrah of approbation, and rode on to Baalbec. Arrived at the village, the Hakeem related his discomfiture to several of the tatterdemalion citizens. "Ah, the hawk," said they. "No; you cannot shoot him. He belongs to a dead prophet;—the one who is buried on the hill;—you can see his tomb from the road. The bird belongs to him."

A strange, startling idea! Put it a raven

belonging to a dead magician, and it rings of Ariosto. Put it as it is, hawk and prophet, and there is nothing which sounds more antique, more druidic. Imagine such a bird, protected by the wraith of him who is dead, or perhaps the new embodiment and incarnation of that wraith, haunting a lonely tomb by a ruined city, shrieking day and night some mysterious and terrible malediction, waiting in solitude for its sure accomplishment, and scornful of every death until its prophecy be fulfilled, or its secret enchantment be discovered and broken. I toss the idea to our poets and fictionists.

To the eternal discredit of the prophet in question, I can relate that this enchanted bird was that evening shot and taken by one of the villagers. This liberal-minded individual, incited by the Hakeem's unpunished act of sacrilege, took his Arab gun, six feet long, and winged the hawk at the first fire. He afterwards brought him to our tent, a beautiful bird, with a calm, audacious eye, quite unterrified, and ready to peck any-body's fingers on the slightest provocation. He was so quiet and fearless, that I have no doubt he had been tamed

by the late respectable seer, whose white tomb was now his favorite roosting-place. The man was willing to sell him, but, as we declined the purchase, he said he should keep him and teach him to hunt.

In that same glorious valley, the Bukaa, at a village called Ablah, in a low wall protecting the fountain where the women of Ablah came to draw water, the peasants pointed out to us a small carved stone to which they burned incense. Shapeless, with only a dim trace of old art on its battered surface, it showed no sign of divinity, nothing which could account for the ascription to it of miraculous powers. For, to this stone came every woman of Ablah who had any weakness or malady of the breasts, and waved her incense before it in faith of a recovery.

There is another noteworthy superstition of Syria, referable to our human desire of escaping from disease and death. For a whole morning a mountain village resounded with shrieks and mourning, while the body of one of its young men was borne about its streets. The old mother had spent the whole night in the desolate

ravine below, running hither and thither among the bare rough stones, weeping and wailing and shrieking for her lost darling. Now, she rushed behind the bier, wringing her hands and tossing herself vehemently, while an expression of wild agony, similar to a half hidden madness, flickered in her faded features. Behind her came the priest, candles, and crowding villagers, mingling their voices in discordant wailings. On the bier slept the dead, arrayed in his richest apparel, and looking with stiffened, ghastly face upon the blue sky. Across him was laid and fastened a carved scimetar in its sheath of silk decked with gold. Why was the scimetar? O reader, it was to cut off the disease, so that it might descend no farther upon that family.

Parents who have lost children, imagine often that such deaths came to them through some secret and malign influence. Therefore, to break the fatal charm, they name the next child after some ferocious wild beast. Thus, Deeks and Nimmers, that is Wolves and Tigers, are quite plentiful in the households of Mount Lebanon; and, if you meet an individual with

such a name, you may know, without asking, that he has some elder brother in the grave.

In a village in the northern part of Syria we noticed that skulls of oxen had been elevated on poles before many of the houses. "What is the meaning of these?" asked the Hakeem. "O Howaja," replied a citizen, "these are to avert the evil eye."

The superstitions of Syria are not new, but older than its temples; not the parasites of a fallen intelligence, but climbing plants of which the national mind was never divested. They are a proof that the Christianity of the race was never thorough; its civilization and instruction never popularised.

Join this inheritance of an imperfect moral education to the depressed condition of society as it is, and who shall reproach the Syrians bitterly for their sufficiently numerous vices! The one for which I least forgive them is their constant lying. This vice seems to be the most contemptible of all, because it is the most cowardly. A thoroughly brave boy tells the truth, no matter what are the jeers of his comrades, no matter what is the severity of

the paternal rod. But the Syrians are morally neither brave boys nor brave men ; and forever lie, on occasions ordinary and extraordinary.

I dined one day in Jerusalem, at the house of Doctor MacGowan, of the English mission, in company with our Sagamore. Doctor MacGowan told of a Syrian who had lately called on him to ask the news. The doctor gave him the particulars of a fresh English victory in India. The visitor, not to be outdone, replied with an account of a battle just fought between the Turks and the Persians, in which the former had slain ten thousand of their unfortunate antagonists. Now, no such conflict had happened, and there was no *wár*. Whether this was a lie of vanity, not wishing to be out-glorified ; or whether it was a lie of politeness, invented with the courteous intention of amusing the doctor ; or whether it was simply a lie quizzical, it was impossible to discover in the visitor's imperturbable countenance.

It reminded the Sagamore of a conversation with a Koordish Beg, whom he had astonished, as he thought, by describing to him the struc-

ture and speed of a locomotive. The turbaned dignitary heard him out politely, stroked his long beard, and then began gravely to narrate the performances of a wooden mule, which ran between that and the next village.

I remember one curious example of a lie of fear. In the wild country around Nablous, we had a guard, a horseman, bearing musket, pistols, and sabre. As we approached Samaria, the Sagamore asked him if the road was dangerous. "It is dangerous," he replied; "but we trust in God."

But in Samaria itself, surrounded by a mob of the most wolfish-countenanced men that I ever saw, he began to doubt about God being a sufficient protection, and proceeded to help Him out by lying a little. Pointing to the Sagamore, he bade the villagers to look upon that man: "For," said he, "that is the Turkish general who took Acre from the Egyptians in two hours."

Little truth is spoken around the beds of sick men in Syria. Over the awful circumstance of death, falsehood broods, hiding earth and heaven with its dusky wings. The doc-

tor cajoles the relations, and both unite in cajoling the patient. It astonished the Arabs beyond measure, when the Hakeem sometimes said: "I can do nothing more for your friend: I think he will not recover."

Two Druse men, from a mountain village, brought their wives to his house for medical advice. In compliance with the Druse customs, the Hakeem conducted the women into a separate room. One of them then removed her veil, and discovered an eye so much diseased, that the sight of it was gone forever. When the Hakeem returned to the hall, the husband asked his opinion. He replied, "She will never be able to see with that eye again."

The man either misunderstood him, or could not believe his ears, for he responded: "Yes; with your care and with the blessing of God, I have no doubt she will soon be restored." Aasa, one of our neighbors, and one of the principal inhabitants of the village, a fine-looking old man, with a venerable beard, corrected his mistake: "You do not understand the Hakeem; he says that the patient's eye will never get well."

Then, seeing that they were quite confounded by such a plain, and, to their ears, brutal declaration, he added : “ You must not be astonished, O my friends, at this. We Arabs tell each other lies ; and even when we know that a man is dying, we say that he will soon get well ; but these Franks have a very different way: they speak out plainly whatever they think.”

Emphatically Syrian old Aasa ! he looked upon it as simply a difference of customs ; and in his heart he thought that the way of his own people was the better and kinder way. His countrymen do not understand an invariable truth-speaker, and attribute his constancy and openness of affirmation to obstinacy and discourtesy. Talk to them, indeed, of the duty of truth, and they agree with you, and perhaps quote the Scriptures copiously in support of the idea. But they believe that lying is, after all, justifiable to attain a good end ; and, as a matter of course, their practice largely outruns their theory.

“ Let us reason the matter,” said Hadji Nasif, a poet, and a corrector of the press for

the American mission. "Let us suppose that the good performed through the lie is greater than the evil of the lie itself. Who, then, should hesitate to tell it? Suppose God places me at the fork of two roads, down one of which I see a man on a jaded horse flying from an assassin. He is already out of sight, when the pursuer, freshly mounted, arrives, and questions me as to the route of his intended victim. If I tell the truth, the fugitive dies, and his blood clings eternally to the skirts of the other. If I tell a lie, a human life is saved, and a great sin is prevented. In such a case, God himself would have me utter the falsehood."

It was well put, O most ingenious Nasif! and the mass of men would, in such a case, follow thy teachings. But the *habit* of lying, O Nasif! it loosens the bands of society, and opens the way for all cowardice and crime. Life in general is not so safe in a truthless community as in a veracious one.

I remember one instance of Syrian manners characteristic of a society where fraudulent and underhanded dealings are not discountenanced.

In the hall of a Sheikh of the Abd-el-Meleks, sherbet was brought for the Hakeem and myself. Our entertainer first took the cup and tasted of it, to prove to us that there was no death in its contents. It was a mere form ; a relic, perhaps, of other times ; but still a witness that the race was not free from the dark crime of poison.

I did believe sometimes that the lying of the Syrians was partly owing to their overwrought politeness. They deem it a courtesy to say No ; and their dislike of that ungracious syllable often leads them into the most inconvenient evasions. Travelers in the East would do well not to put leading questions, or the answers will many times be such as will suit their preconceived ideas, rather than their desire of information. Journeying through Galilee, and having lost our way, the Sagamore repeatedly asked, “Is this the road to Nazareth ?” to which the answer was always “Yes.” Nor was it till he changed his formula and said, “Which is the road to Nazareth !” that the peasants set us in the right way. Ask a Syrian to do a certain thing for you, and

he will often promise, when he cannot or does not intend to perform. Charge him afterwards with unfaithfulness, and he will reply, "But, Howaja, I saw you wanted it very much, and I could not tell you no to your face ; but when I came to accomplish, I was unable."

Sometimes the answers which a traveler gets to his questions are intentionally elusive. Meeting some peasants on Mount Lebanon near the cedars, the Hakeem held with them the following unsatisfactory conversation. " May God bless your morning."

Sulky Peasant. (*In the tone of "Go to the devil!"*) May He bless yours also.

Hakeem. Where are you going ?

Sulky Peasant. Going this way.

Hakeem. Where are you from ?

Sulky Peasant. From the country at large.

Another Syrian annoyance is the begging disposition of the people. It is not universal, but it is teasingly common, even among the well-to-do classes. The lower orders often beg without necessity, merely for the gratification of getting a present, and sometimes with a laughable air of gayety and indifference.

As the Doctor, the Chaplain, the Sagamore and I were climbing the hot sides of the Mount of Olives, we heard a clear, shrill voice behind us, calling : “ O Howajas !” We looked around, and saw a slender girl of twelve, heavily laden with a burden on her head, yet rapidly overtaking us up the steep ascent. “ Will you go to El Aziriyeh ?” [Bethany] she said as she came up with us. “ Come ; I will guide you there.”

We declined to accept her offer. She laughed gaily, and then picked up some mosaics and handed them to us. The Doctor and the Chaplain each gave her half a piaster, more for her good-humored face than for her antiquities. She then attacked the Sagamore and myself for a *baksheesh* ; but ragged girls are no rarity in Syria, and we refused to be generous. “ But these gentlemen have given me something,” she said ; “ why do you not do so also ?”

“ And why should we ?” asked the Sagamore. “ What !” she exclaimed with dignity. “ Shall I ask you for a present and you not give it me ?”

A day or two after, as we were wandering on the other side of Olivet, we heard the same voice calling to us: "O Howajas!"

There she was again, still with a burden on her head, stepping as light as a gazelle, and smiling with pleasure to see us. Touching my hand with her fingers, she raised them to her forehead, and said, after the manner of the Moslems: *Salaam aleikoom.* This is a salutation seldom accorded to Christians, but won for us by the piaster of the day before. Passing on, she saluted the Doctor as she had done me, and laughed rather wonderingly when he took her hand and gave it an Anglo-Saxon shake.

"What is your name?" asked the Sagamore.

"Fatima, O my lord!"

"Are you of the faith of Islam?"

"Praise be to God!—Have you been to El Aziriyyeh?" she continued. And left us with a smile.

Every traveler who has had occasion to make a bargain in Syria knows the ridiculous difficulties attending that financial operation. One of the most interesting of these scenes occurred during my trip to the Dead Sea. For the pur-

pose of hiring an escort from Jericho around to Mar Saba, our party united with an English one, forming all together a company of seven Americans and fourteen Britons. At evening the Sagamore went to see a Sheikh of the Ahtame, who said that he would come to our tent after supper and let us know his conditions. Vestured in crimson silk, tall, handsome and dignified, the Sheikh came, accompanied by one of his chief men. With implorations of peace upon us, they seated themselves in our tent and smoked our pipes in fine calmness. When this ceremony was over, the Sagamore asked what they would charge us for an escort.

“ We cannot think of demanding anything,” said the Sheikh. “ You shall give us what you please,—when the work is done,—at Jerusalem.”

This was mere politeness, and the Sagamore delicately pressed for something more explicit.

“ Then,” said the Arab, “ let it be fifty piasters a head; and God be your reward !”

As this rate for the whole party would have amounted to 1,050 piasters (\$44), an enormous

sum for the service, the Sagamore rejected it, and offered one hundred piasters for the entire job. After nearly two hours of compliments, smoking and chaffering, he rose to 150. The Sheikh refused this, and left us with an air of offended dignity. But, going straight to the tent of the English party, he held another long parley, and finally closed the bargain at two or three hundred piasters, I have forgotten which. Four or five of his tribe were to go with our baggage direct to Mar Saba, while he in person was to accompany us to the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Not until three in the morning did we feel certain that we were to have his mighty protection. Then, through the dim moonlight, he approached our tent, and, putting his bronzed face within, said: "Come, if you wish to go: I am ready." Nor was it until broad daylight that we discovered that the Arab with the long lance, who rode by our side, was only one of his followers. Probably, he had made the same promise of personal surveillance to half a dozen parties, fulfilling it, perhaps, to none.

There are several countries, where public

officers are occasionally unfaithful to their duties—and Syria is one of them. As in various lands of Europe, every city has its Customs, where, curiously enough, goods are often taxed coming out of the gates, as well as going into them. The Hakeem and I came upon the Customs of Damascus in a narrow pass, where the road first enters the crumbling, chalky rocks of anti-Lebanon. As we approached it, an officer issued from his post, in a cave by the way-side, and the following dialogue ensued :

Officer. O, Howaja, have you a paper showing that you have nothing taxable, or that you have paid the proper duties ?

Hakeem. No. Is it necessary ?

Officer. Yes. What have you in your packages ?

Hakeem. Some goods belonging to myself.

Officer. (*Smiling to think that the Howaja will force him to speak out.*) Well, give me a present, and many salaams to you.

As for the little family moralities of the Syrian Moslems, I did not obtain a very high opinion of them by spending a couple of days under the roof of two respectable Islamite

brothers at Hums. Hums is a flourishing town of 15,000 inhabitants, but with a neighborhood so badly policed that we did not deem it safe to pitch our tents outside of the walls. In fact, the good inhabitants would not let us, and insisted very wrathfully on our occupying some one of their houses, and paying as well as we could afford for the shelter. Accordingly, we entered the gate of the said two brothers, Hamood and Zeid, and unloaded our mules in the court-yard. A wing of the house, consisting of one large room in the second story, and of a terrace formed by the roof of the kitchen, was assigned for our lodgment. We pitched one of the tents on the terrace, and found ourselves not badly accommodated. In fact, I was quite pleased with our post of observation, as there were several women to stare at, the two wives, a sister, and the mother of our hosts. They clattered here and there constantly in wooden pattens, tidily dressed enough, and hidden, most of the time, by long veils of checkered cotton. When their lords and masters were out of sight, the veils went over their shoulders, and they looked at us with

both curiosity and coquettishness. One of them, the wife of the youngest brother, was a tolerably fair and rather pretty woman of twenty-three. Perfectly conscious that she had a good face, she sought to let us know it by improving every opportunity of tossing that envious veil out of the way of our vision. All this was very pleasant, and I was more interested by it than mine host, Zeid, would have liked to know.

But the next day I was rather disillusioned by detecting this agreeable little lady in a petty larceny. She walked through the court-yard, flung a half-timid, half-coquettish glance at me, and passed out of the gate. Presently, a vegetable avalanche, consisting chiefly of onions, came tumbling on to the pavement over a neighboring wall. In a minute more she returned, picked up the onions, gave me another killing glance, perhaps moistened by a tear, and disappeared in the house. While I was still cogitating on this new and fragrant kind of manna, Yusef entered, his old face wrinkled with a malicious grin, and gave the affair an explanation. He said that, under

pretense of searching for lost doves, our odalisque had gone into an adjoining military barrack, and, secretly laying hands on the aforesaid onions, had dexterously pitched them over into her own territories.

Her next speculation was to represent herself to us as a servant, and, in that capacity, claim a *bakhsheesh*. All the women were continually begging salt, milk, and other culinary valuables of Yusef, who, like an ungracious old bachelor as he was, obstinately refused to gratify them. He was particularly indignant one day, when an individual, a friend of the family, unceremoniously picked a mutton chop out of the pan in which our dinner was preparing, and ate it up instantaneously.

One expedient of this worthy household, for increasing its pelf, was ingenious enough to deserve notice. It had a flock of very tame doves, distinguished from other people's doves by little bits of tinkling metal fastened to their legs. I thought that they were all, men and women, inordinately fond of doves; as the birds never rose into the air without being carefully watched, and treated, on their return,

to a luncheon of grain. Yusef soon explained the mystery in another way. He said that the doves were trained decoys, and were sent up to entice other birds into the cotes of our hospitable landlords.

On the second day of our sojourn, I noticed eight or ten elderly gentlemen in the court, who seemed to be very busy in smoking pipes and eating watermelons. They stayed an hour or two, had a long talk with our hosts, ate all the watermelon they could get, and went away. In the afternoon a young man came into our room and unfolded the object of this convocation. He said that he was a younger brother of Zeid and Hamood, and had been cheated by them out of his proportion of the paternal inheritance. But, every now and then, he came down upon them for some cash, and clamored about their ears until they pacified him with a greater or less number of piasters. The watermelon-eating elders had been called in, as arbiters, to decide how much he should have for letting his brothers alone thereafter.

“And so,” said the Hakeem, “you mean to

be satisfied, in future, with what you have got?"

"Not at all, O, my lord. How can I be satisfied? What they have given me is a trifle and will soon be gone. Then I shall come back and ask for more."

"But, suppose they refuse it?"

"They cannot refuse it. I shall tease and persecute them until they give it. I shall talk against them in the city until they are forced to be generous. Every one knows that they have wronged me."

And so these loving brothers parted. My conscience nudges me a little for violating the privacy of this exemplary family. It is to be hoped, however, that these revelations will never reach Hums, where, by the way, they are probably more a subject of public tittle-tattle than I shall make them in America.

XII.

SOME ORIENTAL ACQUAINTANCE.

FROM the ingenious family of Hums my mind naturally wanders to other Syrian households and characters. The Hakeem had a near neighbor at Bhamdun, who was worthy of a portrait in colors, if not of a page in description. I have already mentioned him as Aasa, an old man with handsome features and a fine presence. He was one of the leading and wealthy personages of the village; Vakeel, too, that is, deputy of all the Christians in the district; and the most conspicuous pillar of the holy Greek church within the same limit. Very grandly, in his huge white turban, scarlet jacket, and blue trowsers, did Aasa use to enter the Hakeem's hall; and, with many hypocritical smiles and meaningless compliments, did he seek to caress and domesticate that somewhat incredulous and independent person; for, our experienced Vakeel, besides several good qualities,

had plenty of vanity, selfishness, and deceit. These imperfections in his character were visible through his eye, the worst feature of his face, a small, gray optic, restless and cowardly as an evil conscience.

Aasa had an ingenious method of enhancing his credit for general information. He talked lengthily with the Hakeem at all reasonable opportunities, and pumped him vigorously on the news, politics, history, medicine, or whatever other subject engaged his curiosity. He then retailed his freshly-milked knowledge about the neighborhood, insinuating that he had just been conversing on the subject with the Hakeem, who seemed to be quite unaware of its nature and importance.

One day he gave us an arithmetical problem, in the form of a story, which he related as an actual occurrence. A quadrangle of us—three Franks and an Arab—we were discussing mathematics when he entered. This was out of Aasa's line, and he kept an unwilling silence for some minutes. At last he managed to drag in his tale, which was probably unknown to the Sultana Schezerade. “There were once three

men who joined in partnership for a certain business : the first put in five hundred piasters ; the second put in three hundred, thirty-three and a third; the last put in two hundred and fifty. By the will of God they gained one thousand piasters, which they proceeded to divide. The first said : I put in one-half of the sum, and I therefore take out one-half. The second said : I put in one-third, and I therefore take out one-third. The last man then found that there were only one hundred sixty-six and two-thirds of a piaster left for him, and asserted that he had been cheated. So they quarreled a long time over the matter, and none of them could explain it. At last one of them said : 'In the name of God let us refer this to a mathematician.' They did so, and the selected mathematician being very expert, solved the difficulty for them immediately. Now, what was the course of the mathematician ?"

I need hardly observe that the catch in this arithmetical puzzle was detected immediately.

He had a pretty daughter—this country squire of Mount Lebanon—a fair child with rosy cheeks, light hazel eyes, and wavy, auburn

hair. She was a good-humored, quiet girl, much troubled with a younger brother, who, like all younger brothers in Syria, had an inalienable right to ride about town on his sister's back. She studied in one of the schools of the American Mission, and showed a considerable degree of talent and ductility of manners. Her sage father afterwards married her—poor, pretty child!—to a man much older than herself, whom she never liked, and from whose house she now wanders on home visits at every possible opportunity.

An equally notable character with Aasa was gray-bearded Aboo Nasr, in whose house we lodged at Nazareth. A Greek also, and of some wealth and influence, he was suspected of a leaning towards Protestantism. He told us, and perhaps truly, that he had set up schools there in imitation of those of our missionaries. In reward for these educational efforts, he wanted to be British consul, or American consul, or the consul of somebody who would protect him from Turkish exactions. He begged our signatures to that effect, thinking that when he had obtained a score or two of such

venerable names he could send them to some government or other, with a fair chance of obtaining the desired dignity. I never saw such a persevering office-seeker. I doubt whether a fresh president is more pestered by hungry applicants for government pap than were the Chaplain and Sagamore by this enterprising philanthropist. He wanted money, too, and asked for it. Not getting it, he requested the Sagamore to write a certificate that he had given the good Aboo Nasr five hundred piasters. "For," said he, "if other people believe that you have presented me with such a large sum, they will be liberal also, and then I establish my schools."

But our upright Sagamore was very indignant at this crafty proposition, and gave Aboo Nasr nothing but a piece of his mind.

Yet, through all this opposition to his desires, the old man was invariably mild, courteous, insinuating. One instance of his urbanity was characteristic of this complimentary people. As he was talking with the Sagamore, the latter observed an unknown young Arab entering the room ; and, supposing him to be some imperti-

nent intruder, he rather sternly ordered him away. "I am sorry," said Aboo Nasr, "that the young man has displeased you; he is my nephew."

The Sagamore immediately apologized for such uncivil treatment of his friend's relative, and desired that he might be called back.

"It is of no consequence," calmly replied Aboo Nasr; "he is very much pleased with your reception of him."

We were visited at all hours of the day by our host's daughter, Saada, a pleasant girl of seventeen. A very erudite woman was she for these parts, inasmuch as she had learned a little Italian from the monks of the Latin convent in the village. She wore wristlets and anklets of solid silver, as also a singular head ornament, common among the women of this region. It was a string of about fifty silver coins, Spanish half dollars and Turkish five-piaster pieces, bound in a semicircle above the forehead. These weighty decorations constituted the girl's dowry.

She had thrown off, to a remarkable degree, the usual timidity of Arab females. She spent

two or three hours in our room daily, with or without her father. Once she went so far as to ask the Chaplain to take a walk with her, an unheard-of imprudence in Syria, and which, if known, would have brought down on her all the evil tongues in Nazareth. Another time she begged him very privately to give her a few piasters, with which she proposed to buy some sweetmeats. Indeed, she took such a fancy to our bachelor Chaplain that he got rather ungallantly annoyed at her attentions. On leaving, the Sagamore paternally warned her not to ask young travelers in future to walk with her. She thanked him with a rather frightened air, kissing her fingers repeatedly, and raising them to her forehead, in token of her maidenly gratitude. We left her, one of the prettiest girls of Nazareth, where clean and pleasing faces are more common than in any other village of Syria.

A remarkable character was a wayfarer, who overtook us in the great plain beyond Hamath. He was traveling on horseback, attended by a couple of agile comrades on foot. His herculean form was wrapped in a large

striped *abeih*, or Arab cloak. His dark, bronzed features were singularly regular, and shaded by a beard of jetty blackness. The gay, good-humored glitter of his white teeth contrasted with a wild, flashing, bold eye, of somberest light. His voice, like that of all the Bedaween, and many of the peasants of the region, was loud, stern, and startling. His gestures were violent and excited, but pleasing by their savage grace and vigor. A grand model for a desert brigand! a noble cavalier to lead the Saracens of some new religion!

“What are you?” said the Hakeem.

“I am a wanderer,” he replied in a voice of thunder, waving his hand towards the boundless plain before us. “Once, I was a soldier, when Ibrahim Pasha seized me.”

Then he asked us if we would kill him in our country because he was a Moslem. He watched our motions with keen interest, laughing sometimes with a childlike glee at what was so strange and curious. He pulled up his horse, to see the Hakeem adjust his compass, and take bearings of the surrounding villages. “What an amusing companionship we have

got into to-day!" he shouted in his deep, sonorous tones. "O yes!" screamed the others; and the desert rang again with their untamed merriment.

A still more amusing personage, whom we met in the same region, was one of those mounted bailiffs of Syria, the Howaleyeh. We had pitched in a village called Tell Nebby Mene Dthou, when he came to our tent and offered his services as guide and guard for our next day's journey. He was a stout, handsome man, of about thirty, bold, swaggering, and even impertinent in his manners. Undismayed by the presence of the Hakeem's wife, he marched into the tent, and made himself at home instantaneously. He talked volubly for more than an hour, about the country, about us, about himself, about anything that came uppermost in his turbulent brain. He had a fine horse, which he proposed to sell us for about forty dollars. He was dissatisfied with his present condition, and said he should go to Egypt. "I have a brother in Egypt," he continued. "He has been a long while in the service of the pasha, and has made himself

rich. I will go there and throw myself upon him ; and, if he refuses to divide with me, I will tease and persecute him until, please God ! he will die ; and then the property will be mine. Then I will go to Jurgistan (Georgia), and buy me the handsomest girl in the country. Ah ! Jurgistan is the place for handsome women.”

He then turned to me, a brother bachelor, and proceeded : “ Come, you and I will go together to Jurgistan ; we will buy there two beautiful girls with brilliant black eyes ; one of them shall be for you, and the other for me. Will you go ? ”

Hakeem. In our country, O Howaly, wives can be obtained without paying for them.

Howaly (highly delighted). Is it so ? God be praised ! But suppose I go to the father, and ask him for his daughter !

Hakeem. He will tell you to ask the girl herself.

Howaly (alarmed by a new idea). But what if she should take it into her head to refuse me ! Would that be an end of it ?

Hakeem. Certainly.

Howaly (stupefied). Wonderful ! But that would never do for me.

“But come,” he added, cheerfully, “I am going to take tea with you. I am not ignorant of tea ; and I differ from most of my countrymen in being very fond of it.”

By this time, however, we had got enough of his company, and we contrived not to take our tea until he took his departure.

The next morning he made his appearance again, chewing some of the wretched Indian corn-bread of the country. “How do you like that kind of bread ?” asked the Hakeem. “O Howaja,” he responded, with a grimace, “it pains my throat to swallow it.”

He renewed his offer to be our guardian angel for the day, and we renewed our refusal. It was, perhaps, in revenge for this that he made the following rather insulting inquiry : “Is it true, O Howaja, that the Franks put hog’s milk in their cheese ?”

“No,” said the Hakeem.

“I am glad to hear it ; it would be a nasty custom.”

He mounted his horse, and accompanied us

out of the village ; but as we still objected to his guardianship, he left us in a tempest of wrath.

I was highly gratified in Jerusalem at meeting Paul, the famous factotum of Stevens. I was rather surprised to see a dark, but not bad-looking man, grave in his manners, and clerically dressed in black. Paul, as I understood from the two Bostonians who had him in their employ, was very indignant at Stevens for speaking so disparagingly of him on the score of courage. A coward, he said, he was not, except so far as regarded Bedaween Arabs ; and he had abundantly proved his general audacity by firing a pistol at various rats which haunted his bedroom in Jerusalem. But Paul was unreasonable, on the whole, to quarrel with Stevens, who had been the making of him. All the Americans and Englishmen now wanted Paul ; and he was getting fifty dollars a month as traveling cook and interpreter.

The curious question of our friend, the Howaly, concerning the ingredients of Christian cheese, reminds me of other Syrian observations

on European matters and manners. At El Ain, some hours north of Baalbec, on a route not much frequented by travelers, the Hakeem's lady received a visit in her tent from the wife of the Sheikh, and several other women of the village. They considered her a rare curiosity, and criticized her style of dress, with the enthusiasm of seamstresses. "Put on a *tarboosh*," said one, "your head will ache."

"Take down your hair," said another, "it will look prettier."

"Put on another dress," counseled a third, "this is not good enough."

Here, as elsewhere, they were wonderstruck to see the Hakeem wet his pencil with his tongue, while he wrote. "Look!" they shouted. "*Wullah*!*" He carries his ink in his mouth."

At Barah, far north of this, they also remarked the singular locality of my comrade's ink-bottle. They furthermore discovered that his compass, turn it as they would, always pointed south, towards Mecca: a degree of inanimate orthodoxy which strongly excited their reverential astonishment.

* *Wullah*, a contraction of *Wow*, by, and *ullah*, God.

To protect my face from the sun, I sometimes wore a silk handkerchief under my hat, with the corners drooping down, and tied across my mouth. This head-dress, faintly resembling an oriental veil, together with my shaven cheeks, led a ragged old Syrian lady into a very embarrassing mistake, as to my gender. After looking inquiringly for some time at the uncovered face of the Hakeem's wife, she thus addressed her: "O my lady, why do you not wear a veil, like that one?" pointing at me.

Hakeem's Wife. Because I am a woman.

Arab Woman (*pointing anew at me*). What! is that a girl?

Hakeem's Wife. No; that is a man.

Here followed a general laugh, at which the old lady slunk away, intensely mortified.

The Syrians are perfectly aware, even the most ignorant of them, that their country was once occupied by the warriors of Europe. Various questions, referring to this fact, were put to us during our wanderings through the more untraveled districts. Not far from Hums, a peasant, who sold us some grapes, called

to us as we rode away: "O Howaja, from what part of the land were your ancestors driven?"

As we halted for the night at a rude village, built amid ancient and fallen palaces, a half-naked girl shouted: "In the name of God, what sort of people are these?"

"Oh!" responded an old man, "these are Franks, come to see the houses of their fore-fathers."

Another scene in the same unfrequented country. Villagers staring, in great astonishment.

Hakeem. Have any Frank travelers been to this place before us?

Villager. No; not a Frank has been here since the day that they went away.

As we rode through a small village near Hamath, we were struck with the peculiar architecture of the houses, different from any that we had yet seen. They were of sun-dried bricks, plastered with mud; and each roof exhibited several sharp cones, of four or five feet in height, perhaps meant to shed water. "Why do you build your houses thus?" shouted my

comrade to a worthy citizen who stood at gaze. "This is the only way we know. How do you build yours?" he bawled after us. A wide awake man that; desirous of picking up useful information. Perhaps his roof leaked, and he was anxious to learn how to remedy it.

The most unsophisticated dwellings that we saw in the country were beside the Orontes, not far from its fountain-head. They were nothing but caves, or at the utmost, artificial hollows, scooped in the face of a bank of hard earth. Their inhabitants looked at our tent from a distance, but did not approach it, at least as long as it was daylight. We suspected these ragged Troglodytes of playing a trick on us; for, just after going to bed, I heard a noise of water, and found that it was flowing into my tent. Some unknown persons, with what intention I cannot say, had opened the sluices of an irrigating canal, and overflowed me. The muleteers went up with lights, and tore away the banks, letting the troublesome fluid back into the Orontes. As they reached us, on their return, a gun was fired, but we heard no bullet, and received no further disturbance. The servants

affirmed that the submerging was intended to create confusion, and give a chance for robbery.

Lest any one should acquire too contemptuous an idea of Syrian residences, in consequence of my frequent mention of such things as caverns and hovels, I will describe the house of one of my old friends in Damascus.

From a narrow, intricate, and sun-beaten street, the vision of that palace opened upon me in the shape of blind, monotonous walls, pierced by no window, and relieved by no ornament. The material seemed to be pale, unburnt bricks, slimed over with ashy mud, so as to present nothing more beautiful to the passer-by than a rough blank surface, dull, gray, and cadaverous. A rude, but large door swung on its hinges, admitting us as it were to another dwelling from that which we had imagined to enter. For here, unburnt clay had given place to marble; bareness to profuse ornament; drifting dust to bubbling fountains.

A tesselated pavement was under our feet, formed of alternating slabs of black stone and white marble, smoothed and gleaming in the sunlight. In the centre was a stone-basin,

where falling water murmured forever a song of snowy springs and mountain greenery. On different sides, looked down galleries, whose roofs were supported by slender pillars and pointed arches, varied with carving, and gay with painting. On different sides opened doors, through which were visible dim halls, silken divans, and the stony glitter of other fountains. Furthest from the street, on the most retired line of the square, lay the mysterious rooms of the harem.

But on the left we entered a lofty door, and found ourselves in a saloon so vast and rich that it reminded us of cathedral spaces and glories. Diamond spots of mingling white and black marble made the cool flooring over which rustled the soft tread of our morocco slippers. Of black and white marble, too, was the fountain in the centre of the pavement; and, endlessly, it sang a murmurous response to its brother in the sunlight. On three sides of this room opened others, separated from it, not by doors, but by broad, lofty archways, so that the four were one. Forty feet above us hung the ceiling, made of beams of cedar carved into filagree,

painted and gilded until it seemed like the roof-work of a dream. From height to flooring, the walls and archings were all one variegation of colors and gold; figures designed with strange fancifulness, grotesque stars and flowers, such as glitter in a kaleidoscope. The wooden floor of the three alcoves, somewhat elevated above the central paving, invited us to repose with a show of Persian carpets and silken divans. Over all came a light falling through the many-colored glass of windows far over our heads. Who shall not dream while he is awake, that lies here in this dim beauty; that sees the blue smoke of the *timbec* curling up towards the pointed arches, and hears the bubbling *nargeeleh* respond slumberously to the whispering fountain? I asked the rent of such a dwelling as this, and was told that I could have it for \$135 a year.

XIII.

ACQUAINTANCE IN RUINS.

I HAVE hitherto said nothing concerning Syrian ruins, and I shall continue silent concerning such widely famous ones as Baalbec and Palmyra. But I recollect scores of lonely, forgotten old tombs, and temples, and cities, which absolutely seem to reproach me for not reminding the world of their hoary existence. Scattered over the untraveled crags of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, or along the deserted plains toward Antioch, they are almost never visited by Europeans, and have, for ages, remained mute to humanity. For the half-savages, who wander and abide under their shadow, understand not their broken teachings of history, and have no sympathy for their solemn passion of desolateness.

Among the lower points of Lebanon, whether

toward the sea or toward the Bukaa, repose the wrecks of, perhaps, a dozen temples, each marking the position of some city that lives no more, or of some fountain that, in mockery of human frailty, lives forever. On one of the lofty uninhabited slopes of the great peak of Sunneen, the Hakeem and I came upon a ledge of castellated rocks, in the midst of which nestled a ruined temple. Its walls were guarded and sustained by the serried lime-stone points, and the enclosure of its exterior court was partly fashioned of their planed and chiseled sides. The hewn, but unsmoothed, stones of the edifice, looked almost as venerably gray as the barren mountain slope which rose behind them. Slender pillars, with palm-leaf capitals, lay prostrate before the ruined portico. Other fallen columns, of a Doric cast, marked the entrance to the court. Further up the ledge, and among the same castellated rocks, was the wreck of an ancient castle. Illegible Greek inscriptions, both on the castle and temple, could tell us no more than the language of their authors. Near by was the rubbish of a perished town; around was a rugged moun-

tain solitude ; in front, a sublime sea, with a shoreless horizon.

In the same lofty country, five thousand feet above the level of the Mediterranean, stands another ruin, facing a cave from which bursts a gigantic fountain. It was, unquestionably, a temple dedicated to the tutelar deity of those rock-born waters. Not so believed a Mutawileh peasant, who came upon us by chance, as we stood at gaze. He told us, that the ruin had been a church of the Virgin, and that it was haunted, after nightfall, by unearthly and wandering lights. Such was the common belief of the country, and he could assure us of its truth, for he had himself beheld these mysterious gleams. As for the cave from which the fountain poured, he affirmed that it led circuitously through the mountain, and came out in the Bukaa, near the village of Zahle. Even this was far from being its greatest wonder, as had been certified by two daring mountaineers, who explored it. Resolved to do the business thoroughly, they led with them a couple of donkeys, laden with pine knots to serve as flambeaux. Amazing, indeed, was the reward of their

enterprising curiosity. The interior proved to be a city, rich with lengthy streets, and with numberless shops and bazaars. But, what was particularly strange, the doors were all shut, and the inhabitants nowhere visible. The adventurers wandered so long through this sunless city, that their lights began to fail, and they had to return, without reaching Zahle. It was reported, that they had heard the sound of artisan hammers in the city; but, concerning the verity of this rumor, our cautious Mutawileh permitted himself to doubt. Certainly, if this mountaineer's credulity was laughable, his story was striking, by its spectral and mysterious fancifulness. Hidden city of Mount Lebanon! how well dost thou symbolize the unseen cities of the abysmal human soul!

On the eastern slope of the peak of Mechmel, in a narrow valley, nearly six thousand feet above the level of the sea, we rode by the borders of the lake of Yemmonch. At its southern extremity, facing a cascade, which fell from an exuberant fountain, were the ruins of a temple, whose inconsiderable cell, only fifty-six feet long, surmounted a platform of ponderous ma-

sonry, two hundred and sixty-five feet in length, by two hundred and five feet in breadth. Like several other temples of the Libanian region, it was evidently modeled after Baalbec, in this particular of a lofty and extensive base. Roman inscriptions, some of them containing the initials of Hadrian, lay about the valley. The lake was a mile long, when we saw it; in the spring, it has twice that magnitude; but, late in the fall, it dries up, for a time, altogether.

At Neha, at Kersunabeh, at Judeithah, at Deir el Ahmar, and at Burj esh Sharah, are other temples, sometimes two in company. Varying from seventy to one hundred and twenty feet in extreme length, they are built of large, well-cut blocks of lime-stone, often twelve or fifteen feet long. The columns are all prostrate, and the walls generally reduced to less than half their ancient height. The walls of Kullaat Neha are laid in double courses, the stones being held together by metallic bands.

In Anti-Lebanon, ruins of temples are visible at Nakleh, Deir el Ghuzal, Hashmush, Salhiyeh, Wady Hummarah, Aithy and Zekweh.

But, of all these little fanes, these country chapels, so to speak, of Syrian Paganism, the best preserved is that of Mejdel. It crowns one of a series of descending hills, situated in the southern part of the Bukaa, and parallel, at a mile distance, to Anti-Lebanon. On the southern and western sides, it is worn and eaten by the unfatiguing enmity of the scirocco. Its heavy pillars, and their plain, massive capitals, lie in a broad platform of ruin, in front of the portico. But its northern and eastern walls yet stand, at their full altitude, above the weighty foundation. One ponderous layer counts but three blocks to the entire depth of the building, each stone exhibiting a length of twenty-one feet and eight inches. The two door-posts of the grand portal are single slabs, twenty-four feet in height, six in width, and four and a half in thickness.

As for the position of this temple, particularly when it looks, as I saw it look, through the golden light of a June sunset, and on plains and mountains fresh with early summer, it is magnificent. From the hill's base, the verdure of the Bukaa, six miles in width, stretches

northeast, in an ascending slope, until it becomes hazy with distance. On the right, arise the long gray ridges of Anti-Lebanon, solemn and imposing by their very barrenness. On the left, facing them, are the mighty rolls of Lebanon, ascending from green hills, crowned with villages, to lofty desolate peaks, browed with circlets of snow. Green and gold is the base of that vision, in my memory, closing above in dazzling summits, which sustain a roof of ethereal azure.

But, of all Syrian ruins, unknown to the horde of tourists, I count most interesting the fallen cities of Apamea and Bara. We visited them during our wanderings over the northern steppes of Syria, between Baalbec and Antioch. It was near nightfall, when, over a plain abounding with gazelles, we approached the site of Apamea. Our resting-place for the night was an Arab hamlet, nested within the walls of a huge old Saracenic fortress. The noisy shouts and wondering laughter of a wild crowd of gazers, showed how little the country was frequented by Frank travelers. We pitched our tent in the central square of the village,

and, by the advice of the sheikhs, housed our baggage under their care, for safety.

A slow nightfall descended, deepening the shadows, and bringing forth, in distincter beauty, the relief of the landscape. The hill, on which stood the village, was steep and isolated, a spur from the broad billows of highlands which spread to the eastward. On its western side, it sunk sheer into a beautiful green valley, which extended visibly north and south for a long distance. Beyond this valley, rose a continuation of Lebanon, abrupt barren ranges, of about two thousand feet in height, sombre with a dark vegetation of stunted trees. This chain, said our hosts, was inhabited by the Ansairea, or Devil Worshipers—for which reason they contemptuously styled it *Jebel Kelbee*, or Mountain of the Dogs.

In the early morning, we rode again through the ruinous gateway of the fortress, and descended the hill. At the bottom, we paused before an erection of Roman antiquity, and inexplicable object. It was a partially fallen mass of stone, thirty feet in height, and as many in length, pierced longitudinally by a high,

but narrow passage, and florid with Corinthian pilasters. Undecided, whether to call it a tomb, a gateway, or a monumental arch, we left it, and rode forward.

An ascent of a few moments carried us up on the broad and smooth elevation, where stood the Apamea of the times of the Selucidæ. And here we paused, as it were, on the shore of a broken sea of pillars, capitals, pediments, and walls, sweeping in gray surges of ruin far away into another shore of verdure. From a southern gate which was fallen, to a northern gate which was yet standing, went a street, of a mile in length, lined on either side by a colonnade of Corinthian pillars. At right angles with it, ran other streets, of lesser width, as straight as the flight of an arrow, and, like the main avenue, adorned with long ranks of columns. But, of the eighteen hundred or two thousand shafts necessary to fill out this immense design, every one had fallen, and lay as if with its face to the earth, in an eternal woe of desolation. Every edifice, also, was prostrate, exhibiting no other sign of its former beauty than a confused wreck of hoary stones. Such

was the general aspect of the site of Apamea—a rounded breadth of verdure, piled and burdened with fallen architecture.

Passing to particulars, we observed that the great street measured over one hundred and twenty feet from side to side, and contained a clear avenue of sixty-six feet between the colonnades. From each colonnade, therefore, to its proper line of edifices there extended a space of seven or eight yards in width for foot-passengers. We imagined that a roof, or, at least, awnings had once stretched from the columns to the houses, shielding promenaders from the fervent Syrian sunlight. It was clear that a continuous entablature, connecting all the capitals, had traversed the entire length of the colonnade. The line of the house foundations was still visible, running, with geometrical exactness, north and south, from portal to portal. But, of the houses themselves, few fragments remained, a circumstance which led us to suppose that only their fronts had been built of hewn stone, and the rest of some perishable material like the unburnt brick of Damascus. Here and there, however,

was a portion of a wall several feet in height, or a doorway only half prostrate. The columns had a diameter of three feet at the base, and an altitude of about twenty-six feet to the top of the entablature. Each shaft consisted of three pieces, set one upon another, without metallic joinings, thus easily falling before the wrath of earthquakes, and dragging down its unstable fellows in a companionship of ruin. They were all of Corinthian cast, florid and yet not elegant; a sure proof that they came of a late period in the history of art. Most of the shafts were plain; others were fluted after strange fashions; spirally, or with combinations of broad and narrow flutings.

Marking the centre of the great street, equidistant from each gateway, was a pedestal twelve feet across, with sides curved inwards, once surmounted by a huge pillar, which now lay in fragments. Not far from it rose the confused wreck of a small temple, surrounded by a court, encumbered with prostrate columns. We discovered one battered bas-relief, representing a Bacchus, with grapes

in one hand and a vine in the other. A jackal started from the long grass near us, and vanished at speed among the piles of ruins. A large hawk, sitting on the upright corpse of a headless column, rose suddenly, as we approached, and sailed away over the gray desolation. These were the only living things that we encountered throughout the broad spaces of a city which must once have resounded to the life of a hundred thousand inhabitants.

At the northern end of the colonnade we passed under the Roman arch of a gateway, which time had not yet severely shaken. On either side of it the wall of defense was still high and solid, and exhibited arched niches, once, probably, occupied by statues. In this suburb of death we rode through ranks of sarcophagi, lying east and west, with their ends towards the street. They were unroofed and empty, the dust which once tenanted them having returned forever to its native dust. Gradually, the last ripples of ruin failed from our path, and we moved once more amid the freshness of a nature heedless of human decay.

On the following day, at nine in the morn-

ing, we entered a shallow valley, choked with the ruins of Bara. Here was altogether another aspect of destruction ; less artistic, less Pagan, more homely, and more Christian. It was a ruin, in fact, not of temples and colonnades, but of shops and dwelling-houses. This difference, together with the better preservation of the edifices, and the occasional presence of a carved cross over the doorways, bespoke an era far more modern than that of Apamea. Bara, or whatever its real name might have been, was clearly a city of the Byzantine empire, depopulated, perhaps, by the Saracens, but more probably by one of the awful pestilences of the middle ages.

We fastened our horses at the gate of a handsome family mansion, a little aside from the main body of ruins. It consisted of two stories and an attic, and was fronted by a portico like every third or fourth house of a New England village. The walls were standing to the apex of the roof, which was pointed exactly like the roofs which cover our American childhood. In short, its whole aspect was so natural and home-like, that I felt disposed to

fall in with the impression of the Arabs, and claim the house as the residence of my own forefathers.

Entering the front door, we wandered through the numerous rooms, almost wonderstruck at their silence. It seemed perpetually as if we should stumble on the inhabitants and have to apologise for our impertinent intrusion. The roof, doubtless of wood, had disappeared totally. The upper floors, too, had fallen, but their imperishable materials still lay around us, and showed the ponderous nature of their fabric. They had, evidently, consisted of long slabs of limestone, supported by thin arches of Roman outline. We passed through the building into a court-yard, and from this into a large garden or orchard, surrounded by a massive wall. Facing the garden, and forming a kind of wing to the house, was a small edifice, with large windows, which we took to be a pleasure pavilion, where the family met at evening. A doorway on the second floor opened into a little piazza, which likewise had a lookout on the garden. The whole pile was built with great strength, every

wall being made of the thickness of single stones, from two up to eight feet long, laid without cement, and depending on their weight alone for solidity. Time had, indeed, so little injured it, that a thousand or two of dollars would have put it in a state of habitable repair. If ever I want a stone house very cheap I shall emigrate to Bara.

We left this respectable mansion and entered a maze of narrow streets, choked with the ruins of a compact city. We wandered in perpetual surprise, through houses and shops, courts and gardens, excavated tombs and lofty mausoleums. What struck us as one of the strangest of many strange objects, was the pointed roof, everywhere visible, so like our own, and so unlike the flat roofs which preceded and which have followed it in the orient. Here and there, the supporting arches of the interior had not fallen, and we could ascend by the stairways and walk about the second floor. The houses in general had two stories and an attic; and, like those of Pompeii, their rooms were small and numerous. The doorways, either square or arched, were often surmount-

ed by a carved lintel. Occasionally, we discovered a court ornamented with small columns of Corinthian, or of Roman Doric. Greek crosses, carved in relief, and small niches in the walls for saints, showed that the owners of the houses were usually Christians. But we discovered one proof that, even at that late day, Paganism had not entirely lost its foothold. This voucher to a perished fact was a short Greek invocation to Bacchus, very appropriately inscribed over the doorway of a building, which, by its vats for liquor, we recognized as a wine-shop. It was startling to see this memento of an idolatrous faith struggling, side by side with the symbol of Christianity, against the ravage of time, and bearing a stony witness to the long and irreconcilable antagonism of the two creeds. Various other inscriptions, some of them ill-spelt and ungrammatical, bore a Christian character.

We entered an excavated tomb with arched doorways supported by pillars; but were almost immediately attacked and driven out by an innumerable army of fleas. Whether these venomous little vermin embodied the spirits of

the ancient citizens of Bara is a question which I leave transmigrationists to decide. They were numerous enough to justify the hypothesis, for, before I noticed them, they had covered my brown linen trowsers almost black with their crawling multitudes.

Another monument was a handsome mausoleum, consisting of a rectangle of fine masonry thirty one and a half feet square, and fifteen or eighteen feet high, originally surmounted by a lofty pyramid. The pyramid had fallen in, and now half filled the interior with its masses of large hewn stones. The exterior was ornamented by a broad cornice of plain workmanship, and two others of a highly florid composition. Within was another cornice, resembling these last in its bold and intricate tracery. Behind this handsome tomb stood another of similar form, but somewhat inferior in size and adornment.

We found only one public edifice, a church, built, like everything else, of large cut stones, but very ruinous, and in a wretched style of architecture. Climbing as high as possible on its shattered wall, we obtained a fine view of

the city and its environs. The entire aspect was wonderful for vastness and confusion, and reminded one somewhat of the sublime hopeless anarchy of an Alpine glacier. It renewed to memory a scene in my native valley after an unusual ice-flood, when the violent river burst, by a sudden effort, the walls of its frozen prison, and hurled them in piled and broken masses into a low hollow which faced one angle of its course. And here it seemed as if the flood of time had swept a vast city from its foundations in populous antiquity, and flung it, confused, shattered, yet not altogether crushed, into this forgotten valley of desolation.

A mile or more beyond the limits of Bara, we could see the relics of two other towns, much smaller but the same in character. The entire valley must anciently have contained at least sixty thousand inhabitants. Now the only life visible was a miserable Arab hamlet, clinging to one flank of the vast ruin of architecture, like an oyster fastened to the wreck of a noble frigate. Several of the ragged villagers came running towards us, clambering

over the piles of stones, and shouting, to our servant, "What are these Franks doing here?"

"They are looking at their houses," responded jesting old Yusef.

"Have they houses here?"

"Yes; do you not see them all around you?"

"O, friends!" said the Hakeem, "why do you not take these fine stones and build yourselves a better village?"

"O, Howaja," replied the feeble barbarians, "these stones are too large; we cannot lift them."

And there we left them, beneath the heavy walls, whose strength, even in ruin, mocked at their savage impotence.

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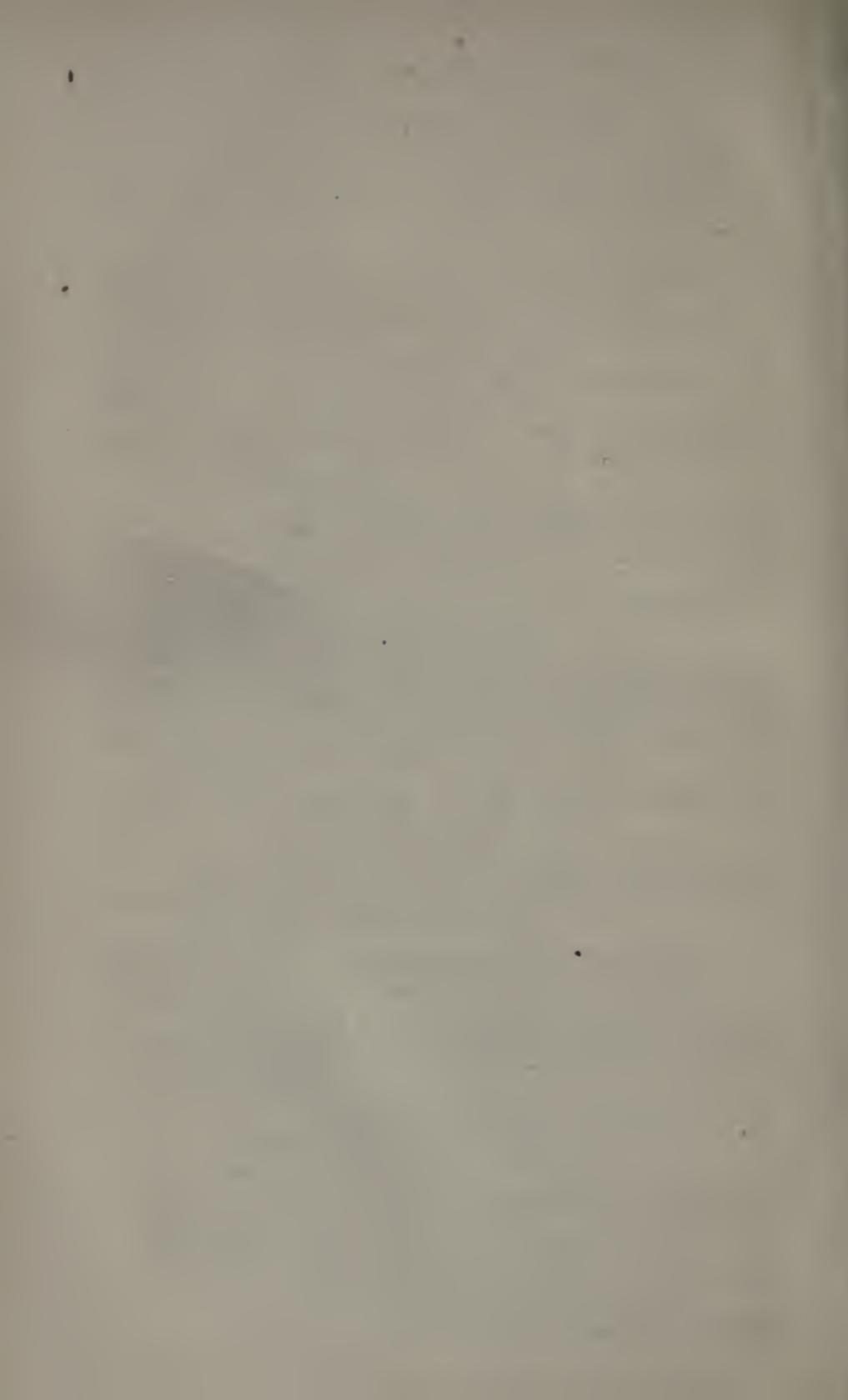
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